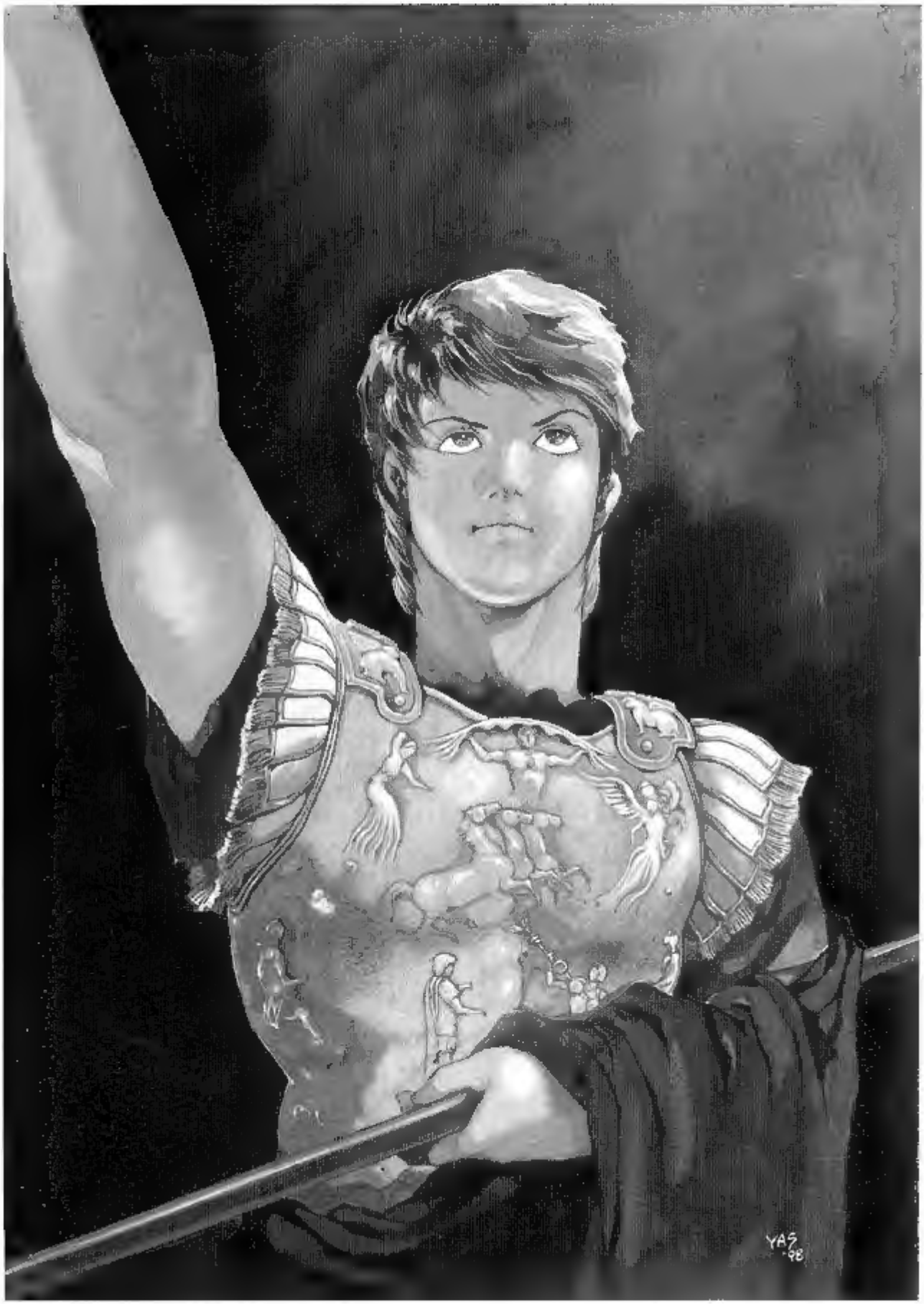
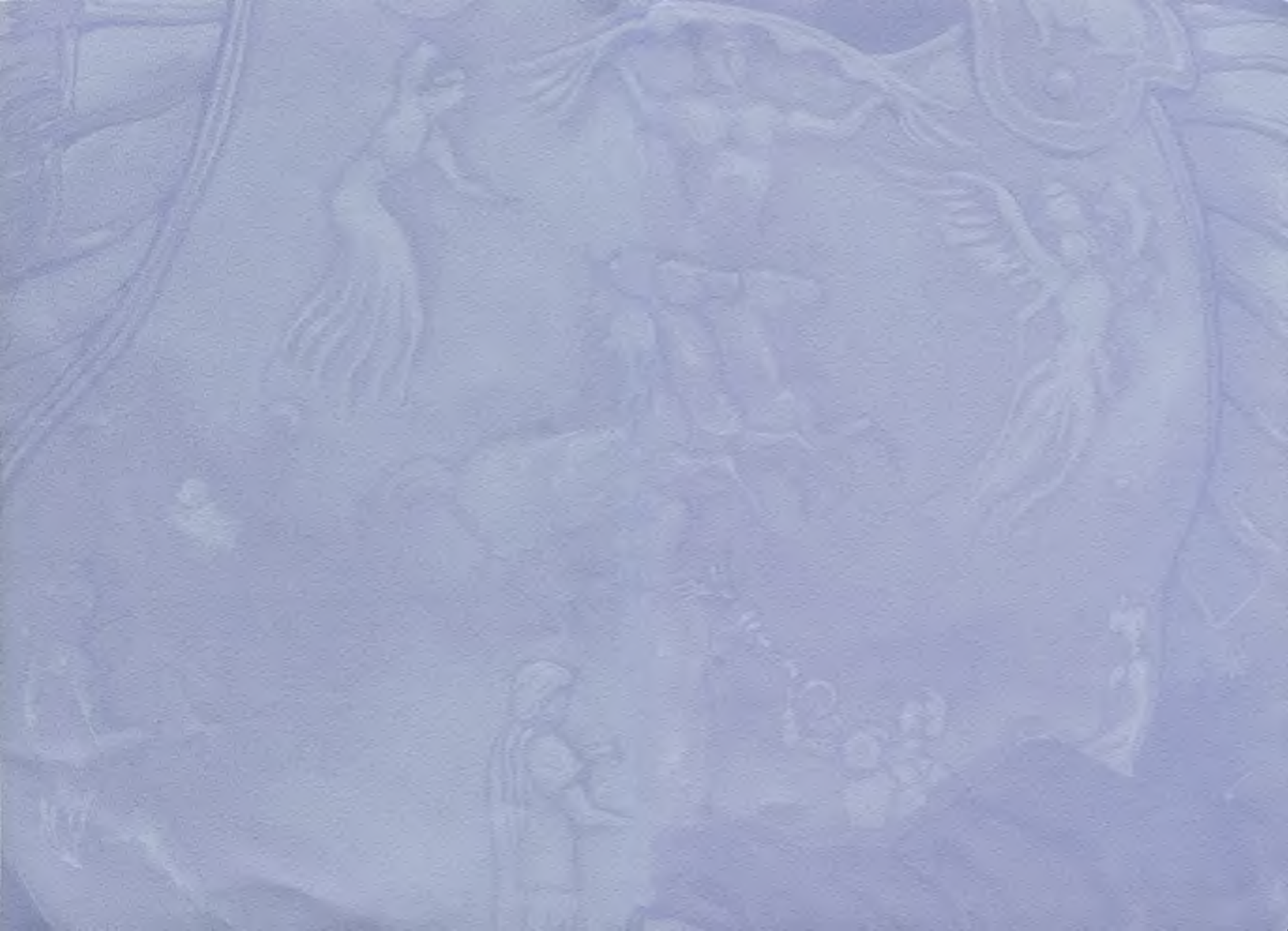
9784160900400
Magazines 58070-40
ISBN4-16-090040-2
C9979 ¥848E
Bungei Shujuu / PRICE: (848 YEN + TAX)
19299790008482

NERO


YAS
'98



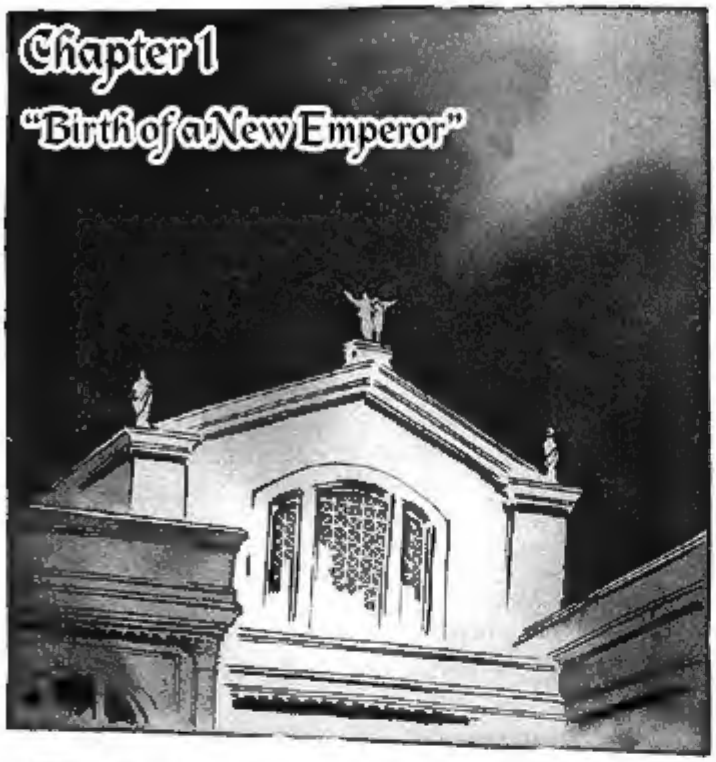
My Name Is Nero 1

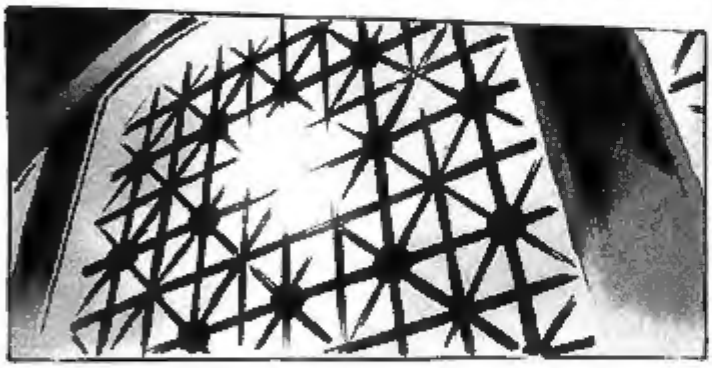
Yoshikazu YASUHIKO

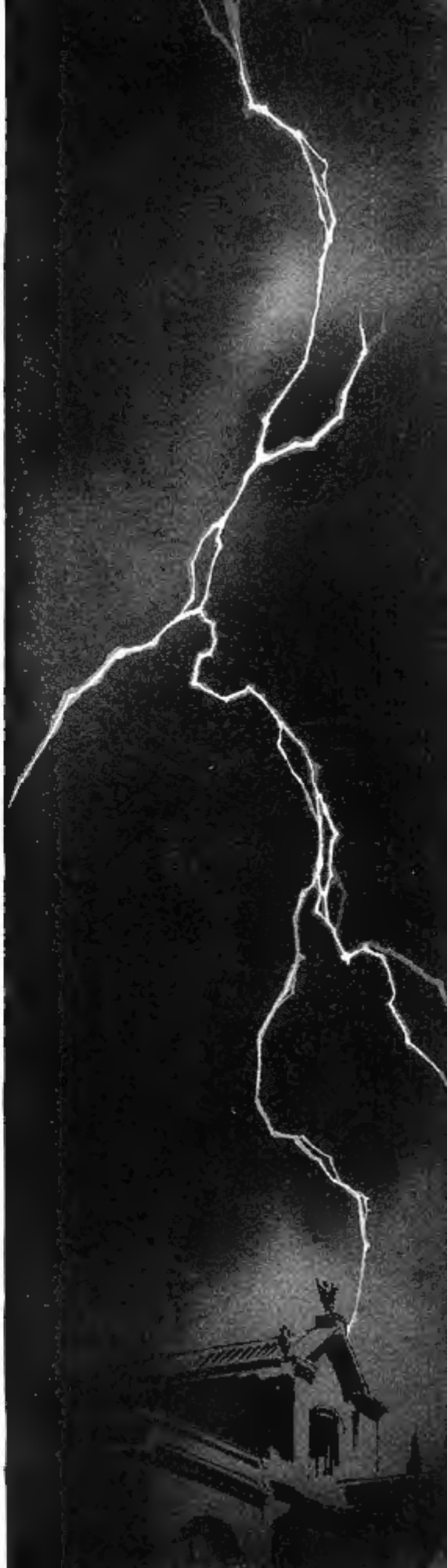
Table of Contents

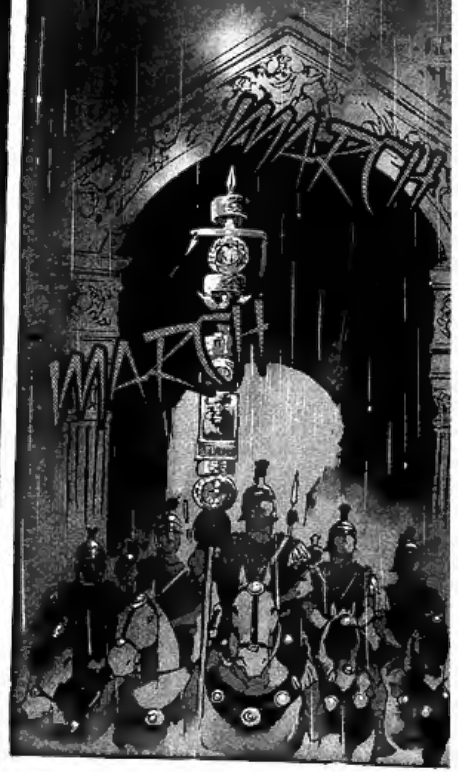
Ch. 1: "Birth of a New Emperor" 3
Ch. 2: "Mother and Child" 37
Ch. 3: "Cruelty" 67
Ch. 4: "The Shadow of One's Father" 97
Ch. 5: "Soldier and Emperor" 127
Ch. 6: "Poppaea's Lure" 157
Ch. 7: "Baiae Way" 187
Ch. 8: "Nero Confused" 217
Afterword 248

Shoujo Magic

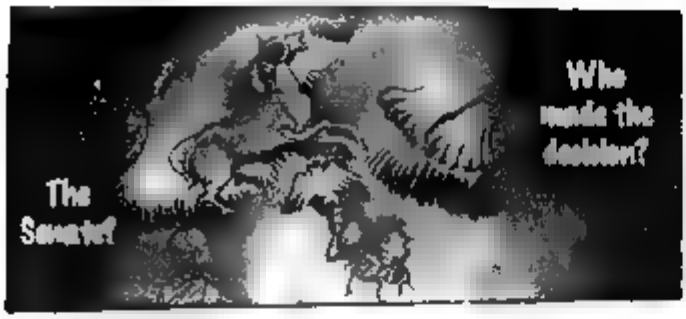

Chapter 1
"Birth of a New Emperor"






MARCH
MARCH

Now my father is dead.
The emperor of Rome.
I knew at the time what was happening.


The Senate!
Who made the decision?

My mother?
Yes.

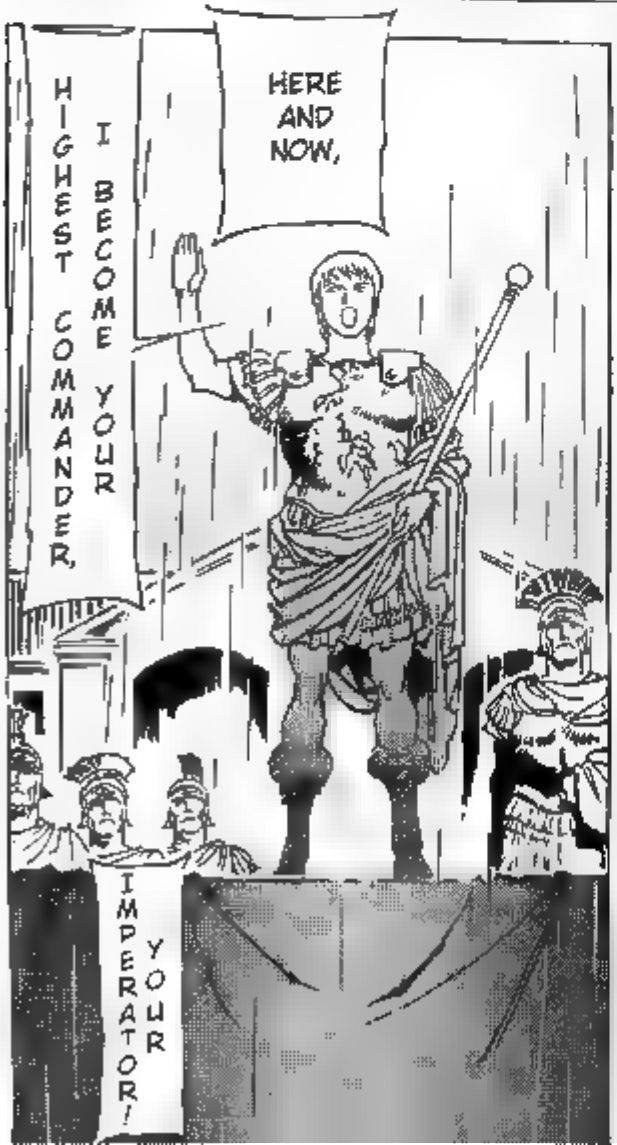
This was something my mother
decided long ago.

And after him,
I am to succeed.

Thus, I go.
To the encampment of the Imperial army on Quirinal Hill, where I will be introduced as emperor.
Just
as my mother said.

LONG LIVE EMPEROR NERO!!

* Caesar = Julius Caesar
** Augustus = Octavian the founding "emperor" of Rome



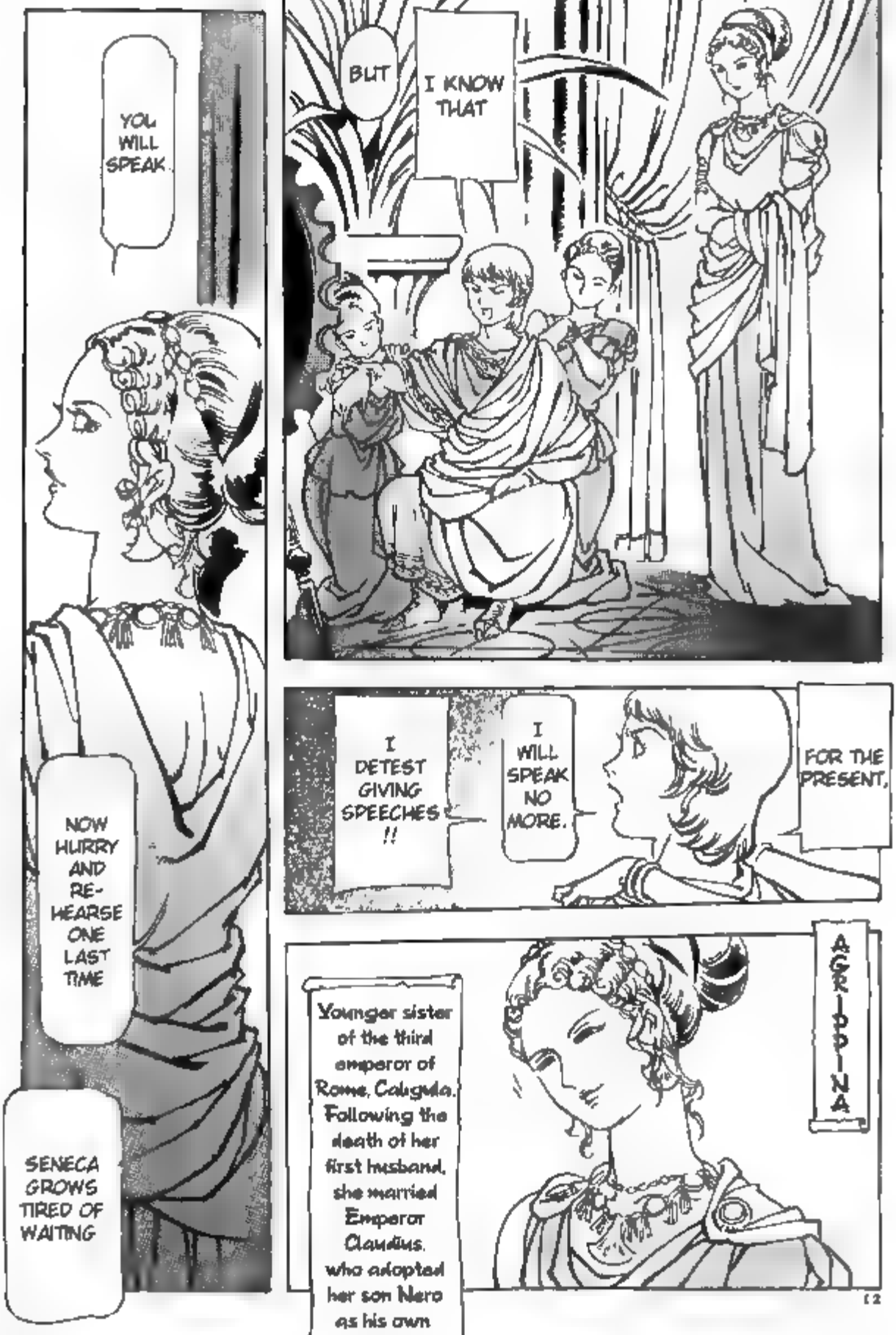
* Germanicus = Nero's grandfather, a well-loved personage and soldier

I
IN ACCORDANCE WITH MY FATHER'S PRECEDENT, I WILL PAY EACH MAN FIFTEEN THOUSAND SESTERTIUS!!

THAT WAS A WON-DERFUL SPEECH

MY DARLING NERO.

YOU NEED ENDURE BUT A LITTLE LONGER.
NEXT IS THE SENATE.


YOU WILL SPEAK
BUT I KNOW THAT
NOW HURRY AND RE-HEARSE ONE LAST TIME
SENECA GROWS TIRED OF WAITING
I DETEST GIVING SPEECHES !!
I WILL SPEAK NO MORE.
FOR THE PRESENT,
AGRIPPINA
Younger sister of the third emperor of Rome, Caligula. Following the death of her first husband, she married Emperor Claudius, who adopted her son Nero as his own

OF THOSE MELAN-CHOLY IMPRES-SIONS
MY YOUTH HAS NOT RECEIVED ANY
THAT RESULT FROM CIVIL WAR OR DOMES-TIC DISCORD!
Distin-guished members
of the Senate !!
VINDICTIVENESS!!
OR
NO FEUD, NO RESENT-MENT
I BRING WITH ME

STOP!
OH!
My children, latest born to Cadmus old
"My people!
A JOKE IN POOR HUMOR!
YOU RECITE SOPHOCLES. HIS "OEDIPUS THE KING"
IS THERE NAUGHT THAT CAN BE DONE?
THE WORDS OF A POLITICIAN ARE DREADFULLY POOR.
Hmphm
AND YOU WILL RECITE IT VERBATIM!
THE SPEECH I HAVE DRAFTED IS FLAWLESS.
MAKE NO JEST!

* Excerpt from Sophocles' "Oedipus the King," as translated by FUJISAWA No'ro

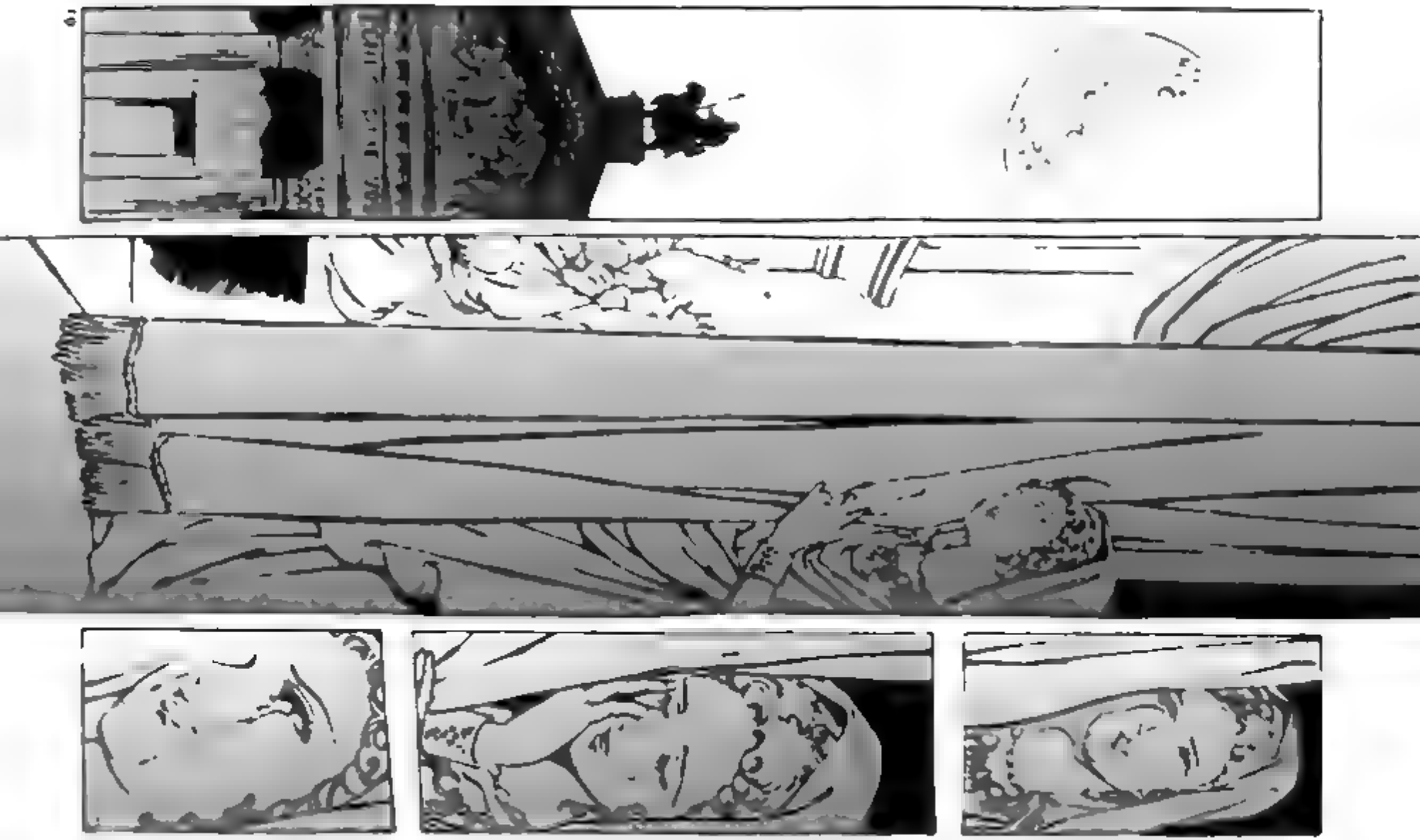
WHEN YOU MUST TREAT POLITICS AS YOUR DUTY, EVEN IF YOU ARE PUT UPON BY IT.
THERE WILL BE TIMES
DO NOT SPEAK SELFISHLY.
Nero's tutor.
Philosopher
SENECA
IS THAT I SHOULD SUCCEED THE JUST POLITICS OF MY PREDECESSOR,
MY WILL !!
MY FATHER CLAUDIUS!
DESIRE ONLY TO GROW OLD IN A STATE OF PROFOUND THOUGHT
HOW-EVER,
I
I MYSELF HAVE NEVER EN-JOYED POLI-TICS
NOW, SPEAK !!
I DENY MY TRUE CHARACTER TO UNDERTAKE THAT WHICH IS MY DUTY
AS I AM INDEBTED TO YOUR NOBLE MOTHER,*

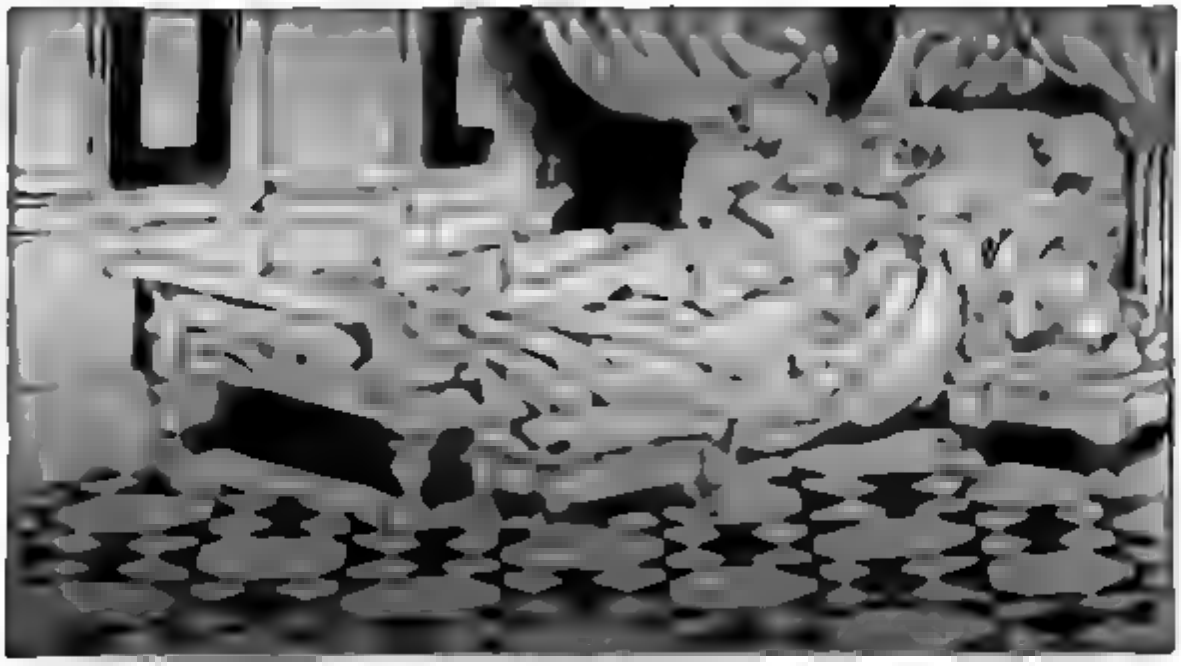
* Seneca was recalled to Rome from exile by Agrippina.

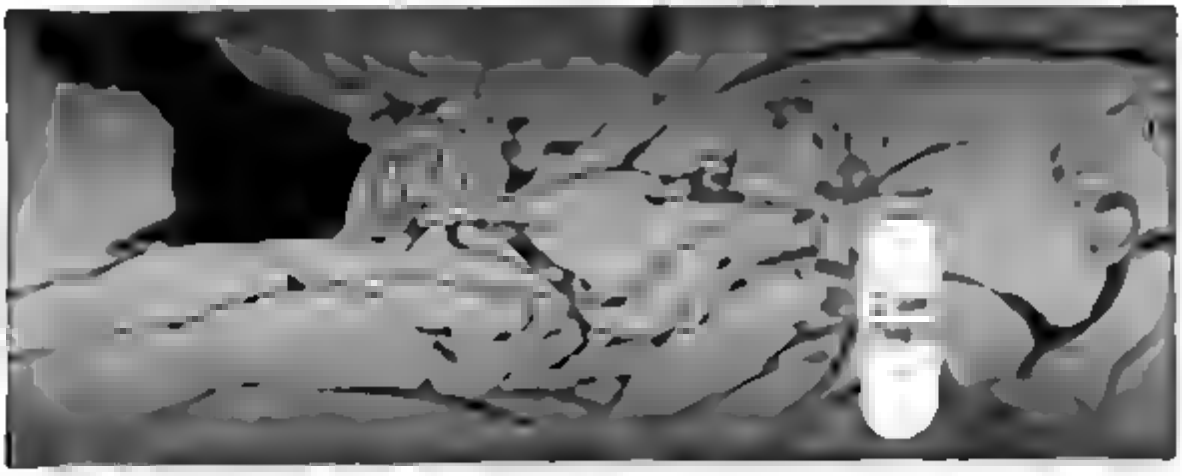
I
WILL NEVER SET UP FOR JUDGE IN ALL CAUSES!
CRIMINAL MATTERS SHOULD NOT BE DECIDED
IN A PRIVATE DOMESTIC TRIBUNAL, BY WHICH THE LIVES AND HONORS OF ROMAN CITIZENS HAVE BEEN SUBJECTED TO THE CAPRICES
OF A FEW GREAT AND POWERFUL MEN!

I WOULD HAVE THE SENATE
THE STATE AND MY HOUSEHOLD SHOULD NOT BE CONFOUNDED TOGETHER!
ENJOY ITS ANCIENT RIGHTS AND PREROGATIVES!!
ANY EMPLOYMENT THAT OUGHT TO BE
SHOULD PROCURE
NEITHER MONEY NOR FAVOR
THE REWARD OF MERIT
Here Here

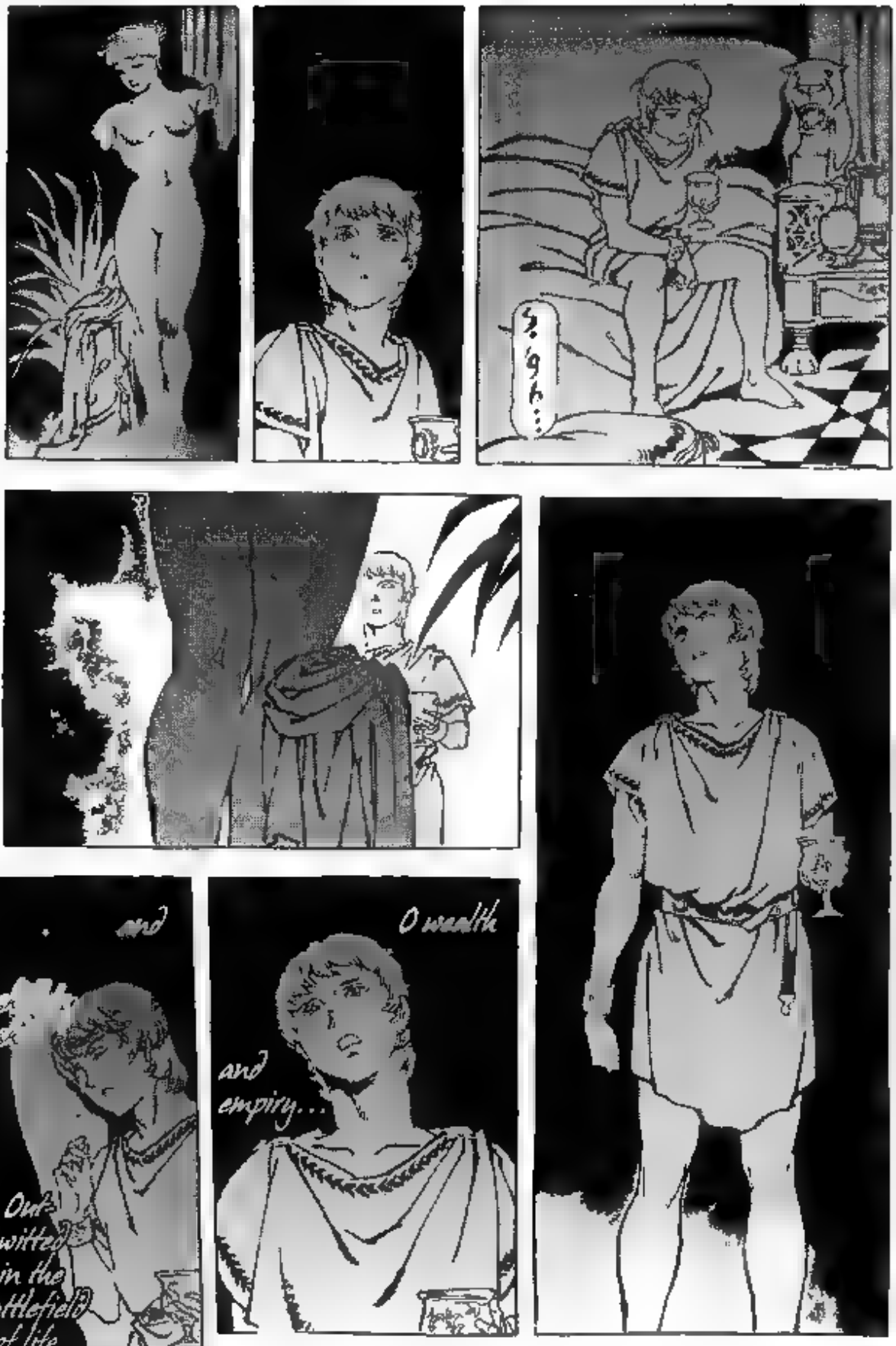
LONG LIVE NERO!!
GLORY TO HIS NAME!!
NERO CLAUDIUS CAESAR!







Shojo Magic


うぅん…
and
O wealth
and empiry…
Out-witted in the battlefield of life.

See,

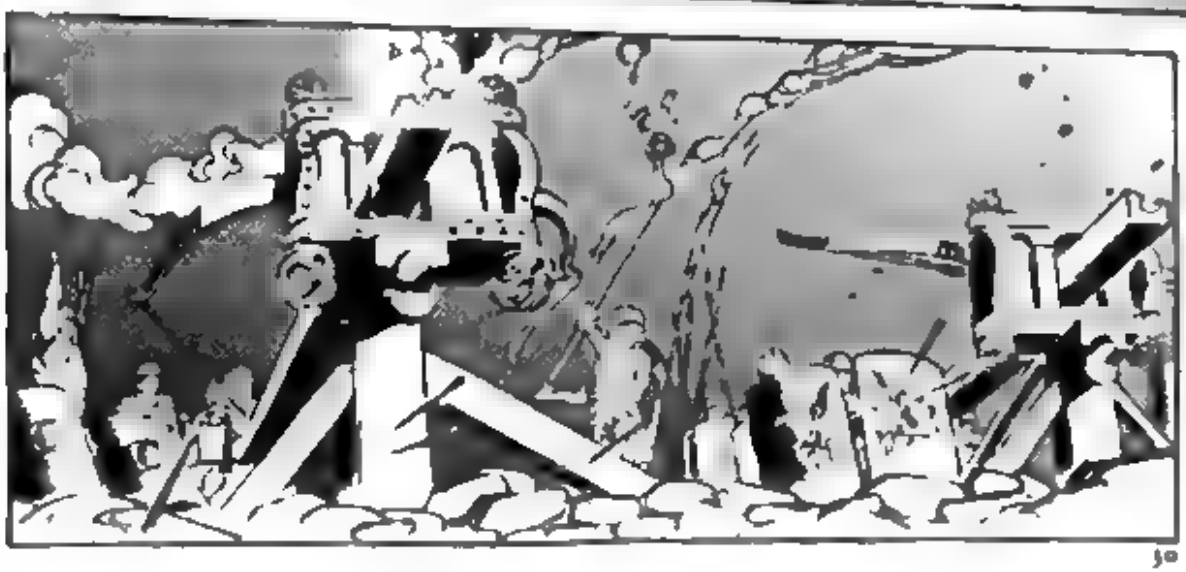
for this crown the
State conferred
on me. A gift,
a thing
I sought not,
for this
crown...

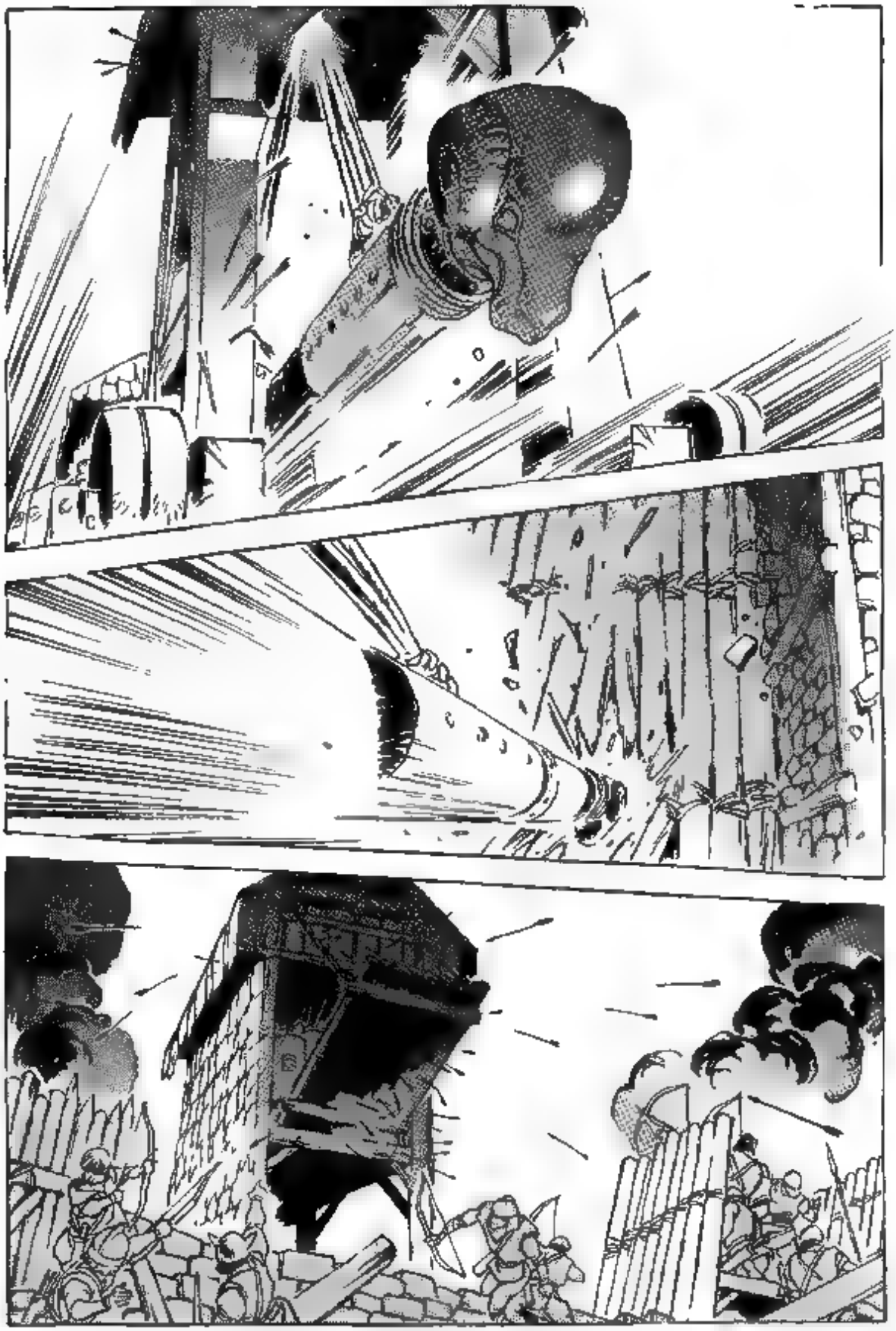
What
spite
and
envy

WHEW

SO WILL TODAY.
AH-HOOO

Mamma...
AAAH!





THEY ARE UPON US!!

SHOOT!
SHOOT!

WAAH!
WAAH!
MARCH...MARCH...
MARCH...

CLANG...
CLANG...

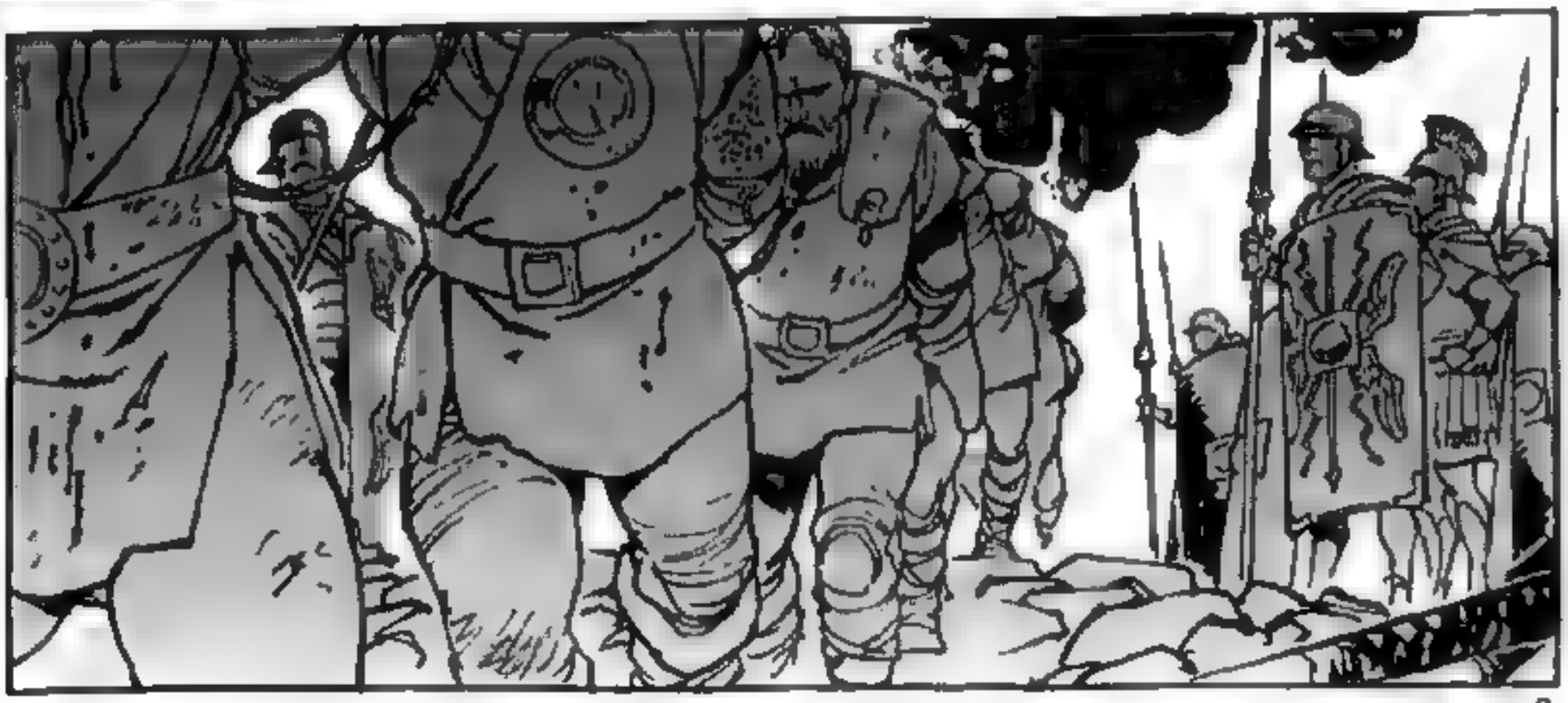
DAMN IT!!

NEXT!

My Name Is Nero

#showomagic@IRC.irchighway.net
www.showomagic.org

Chapter 2
"Mother and son"



IT'S CORBULO.
CORBULO.
CORBULO.

CURSE YOU!

CORBULO...

SOMEDAY,

I'LL BEAT YOU!

SWEAR,

JUST YOU WAIT...

WE CAN'T WIN AGAINST CORBULO...

CURSE OUR LUCK! OF ALL THE ROMAN GENERALS,

WE HAD TO FACE HIM...

YOU REALLY ARE PERSISTENT,

YOU KNOW THAT?

HA HA HA HA HA HA

QUIT IT, PETRONIUS!

I AM THE CAESAR, AFTER ALL!

DON'T TOUCH ME SO CASUALLY!

SPLASH!

HA HA HA

KNOW YOUR PLACE!

I AM NO LONGER THE SAME NERO OF YESTER-DAY!

HA.

I COULD NOT SIMPLY STAND BY AND LET YOUR BEAUTY FADE AWAY INTO YESTERDAY, OVERSHADOWED NOW BY YOUR ENTHRONEMENT

FOR A JUDGE OF BEAUTY LIKE MYSELF.

CAESAR!

THAT IS WHY CUPID HAS STRUCK ME WITH HIS ARROW,

Nero's companion in poetry

Petronius Post-

HA!

OUR AUGUSTUS IS TRULY A MALE HELEN OF OUR TIMES!

I WOULD STILL RATHER CHOOSE TO BE YOUR DEAR FRIEND!

WERE I OFFERED BY THE GODS TO RULE THE WORLD OR BE EVER VICTORIOUS IN WAR,

JUST AS PARIS CHOSE HELEN,

HA

HA...

OF YOUR FRIEND-SHIP AND LOYALTY?

AS PROOF,

WHAT WILL YOU OFFER,

OTHO,

PETRONIUS,

ENOUGH.

JUST NAME YOUR PREFER-ENCES,

AND WILL SEE TO IT THAT YOU GET IT

IF YOU DESIRE FINE WOMEN,

WELL,

HM...

And future emperor.

Nero a self-serving friend,

Otho

AND HOW TO CULTIVATE YOURSELF A LITTLE FROM PETRONIUS!

I SUGGEST YOU LEARN SOME POETRY,

OTHO!

!

.....

.....

CAESAR!

بيه

THIS ENVOY WILL REQUEST ROME TO WAR AGAINST PARTHIA ON ARMENIA'S BEHALF, BUT YOU MUST NOT PLEDGE SUCH A PROMISE.

REMIND YOU AGAIN,

THIS MATTER IS OF THE HIGHEST IMPORT-ANCE

THERE IS ALSO ONE OTHER ISSUE...

YOU CERTAINLY TOOK YOUR TIME WITH YOUR BATH,

EVEN THOUGH THE ENVOYS FROM ARMENIA HAVE BEEN WAITING EAGERLY AT THE COUNCIL HALL..

SHE IS QUITE PERSISTENT IN HER WISHES TO TAKE A DIRECT ROLE IN GOVERNMENT

BUT YOUR MOTHER S QUITE A HANDFUL.

FORGIVE ME FOR THIS REMARK,

EVEN HOLDING THE SENATE MEETING AT THE PALACE SO THAT SHE COULD LISTEN IN DISCREETLY IS NO LONGER ENOUGH FOR HER.

TODAY,

I PREDICT SHE WILL MAKE AN APPEARANCE AT THE COUNCIL HALL.

*PARTHIA. PERSIANATE EMPIRE RULING OVER WHAT IS NOW IRAQ AND IRAN. AS A MAJOR POWER OF ITS DAY, IT WAS FREQUENTLY INVOLVED IN CONFLCITS WITH ROME

IT WOULD TARNISH YOUR PRESTIGE!

YOU ARE THE MPERATOR!

WHAT OF IT?

IF SHE DOES,

AND THE TRIBES ALONG OUR BORDERS WILL NOT RESPECT YOUR AUTHORITY!

YOU WILL BECOME THE BUTT OF JOKES,

THE STREETS WILL BE FILLED WITH RUMOURS OF THE M GHTY ROMAN EMP RE WHICH RULES THE KNOWN WORLD BE NG RULED BY A MERE CHILD STILL LED BY HIS MOTHER!

WILL DEAL WITH HER,

IF MY MOTHER MAKES AN APPERANCE,

IN AN APPROPRI-ATE MANNER

UNDER-STOOD

YOU MEAN THAT GIRL?

OH,

HIM?

WHO'S SHE?

.....

OR GREECE, OR SOME-PLACE IN THE EAST.

I BELIEVE SHE WAS FROM SYRIA,

HER NAME IS ACTE.

SHE'S A FREED-WOMAN SERVANT OF OCTAVIA.

ACTE...

OCTAVIA'S SERVANT...

OCTAVIA, NERO'S WIFE AS WELL AS THE DAUGHTER OF THE FORMER EMPEROR CLAUDIUS

THE USURPER TIRIDATES MAY PROFESS GOOD WILL TOWARDS ROME, BUT HE IS STILL THE BROTHER OF THE PARTHIAN SHAHANSHAH VOLOGASES AND WILL GLADLY DO HIS BIDDING..

THE WHEREABOUTS OF OUR KING, RHADAMISTUS, IS STILL UNKNOWN EVER SINCE HE FLED FROM THE CAPITAL OF ARTAXATA.

ARMENIA HAS BEEN TAKEN OVER BY PARTHIA.

SHAHANSHAH KING OF KINGS, "EMPEROR"

WHEN RHAD-AMISTUS WAS STILL ON THE THRONE,

HE OUTLINED THE PARTHIAN THREAT AND REQUESTED ROMAN MILITARY SUPPORT BUT HIS REQUESTS WERE DEN ED.

BUT SURELY NOW, IN OUR CURRENT SITUATION, ROME CAN LEND HER TROOPS?

IF RECALL,

RHADAMISTUS KILLED THE FORMER ARMENIAN KING MITHRIDATES,

AND USURPED THE THRONE, DID HE NOT?

AH- WELL..

THAT MAY BE THE CASE, BUT I REMIND YOU THAT IMMEDIATELY UPON HIS ACCESSION, RHADAMISTUS SWORE AN OATH OF LOYALTY TO CLAUDIUS, THE FORMER ROMAN IMPERATOR.

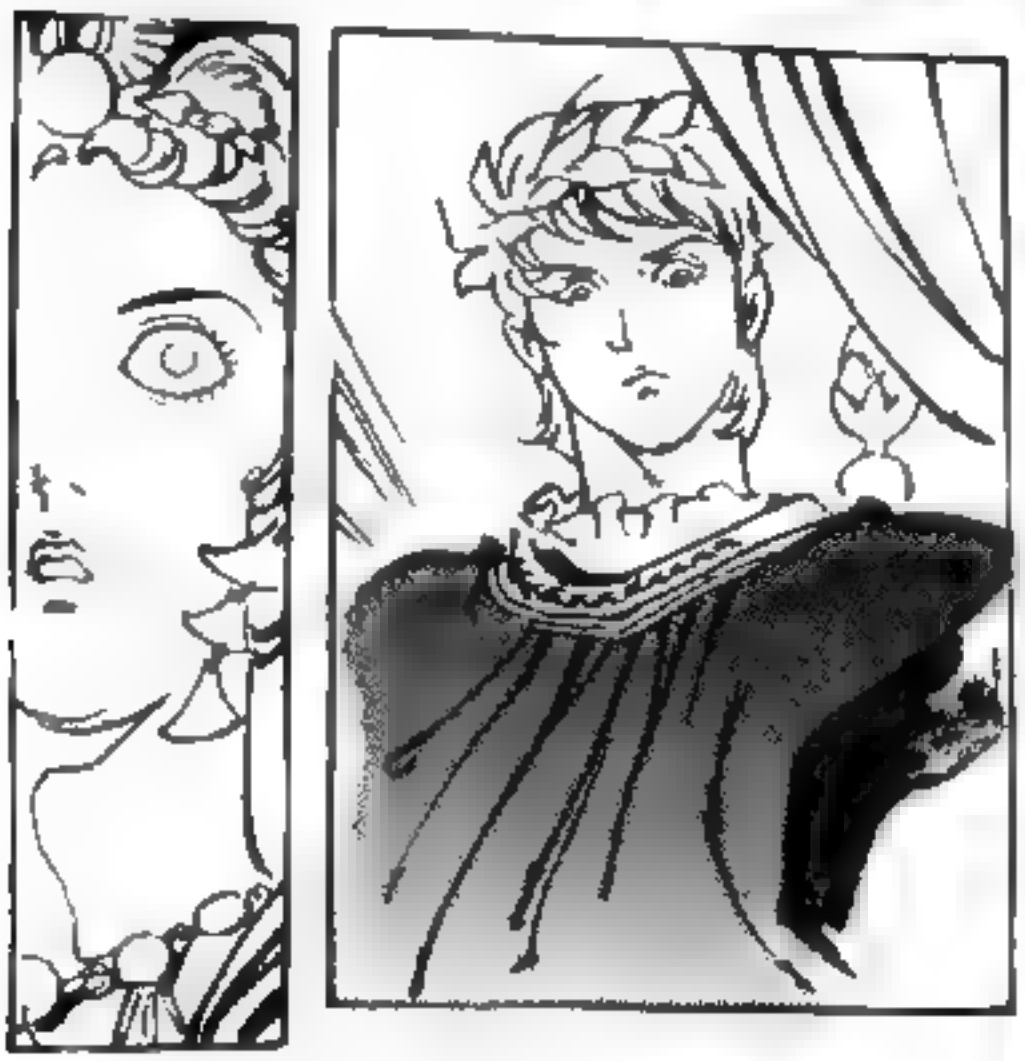
SURELY IT IS TO ROME'S NTERESTS THAT ARMEN A REMAINS A LOYAL CLIENT TO ROME RATHER THAN PARTHIA..

ACTE...

XXXX

??

?



MERO-

DEAREST MOTHER

FORGIVE ME FOR KEEPING YOU WAITING SO LONG.

I TOO PLAN TO ATTEND THIS M-

NO,

I

BUT I ASSURE YOU THIS BUSINESS WILL BE OVER SOON.

TELL ME,

WHAT DO THE PEOPLE OF ARMENIA DESIRE!?

WHAT ARE YOU STANDING DLE FOR!?

MAID-SERVANTS!

ATTEND TO HER ENTER-TAINMENT!

MY DEAREST MOTHER IS GROWING WEARY FROM WAIT NG!

NOW THEN...

TO THIS CHILD...

WHAT IS HAPPENING,

RIGHT BEFORE MY EYES.

IT SEEMS HE'S CHANGING,

TO BECOME A MAN FITTING OF THE IMPERIAL THRONE, THAT IS WELL AND ALL, BUT...

IF HE IS SIMPLY CHANGING,

BUT IF HE IS CHANGING TO GROW MORE DISTANT FROM ME...

NO, THAT CAN'T BE...

HMPH

Octavia

And Nero's wife

Daughter of Claudius and Messalina

Britannicus

Son of Claudius and Messalina

MESSALINA. CLAUDIUS' INFAMOUS 3RD WIFE.
AGRIPPINA WAS CLAUDIUS 4TH WIFE.

IT COULDN'T BE...!

SO YOU'VE COME

AH,

Who gave birth to you, my child!?

Was it some bedmate of Apollo,

Which one of the immortal gods bore you to your father Pan, who roams the mountainsides?

The god who loves all country fields?

Perhaps Cyllene's royal king?

Who took you as a new-born joy from maiden nymphs of Helicon with whom he often romps and plays!?

Or was it the Bacchanalian god dwelling on the mountain tops,

*TAKEN FROM IAN JOHNSTON'S TRANSLATION OF SOPHOCLES' OEDIPUS THE KING

ACTE!

YOU UNDER-STAND, DO YOU NOT...?

I AM THE CAESAR,

OR STRIP YOU BARE RIGHT HERE,

AND TORMENT YOU TO MY PLEASURE

.....

I CAN REVOKE YOUR STATUS AS A FREED-WOMAN,

I POSSESS THE AUTHORITY TO DO ANYTHING.

THIS IS THE FIRST TIME,

I'VE EVER FELT LIKE THIS!

I WOULD NOT DREAM OF IT...

BUT,

I WILL DO NO SUCH THING.

FROM READING POETRY, I HAD KNOWN THAT FALLING IN LOVE IS TO HAVE YOUR HEART SOAR ACROSS THE SKIES,

BUT NOW I TRULY KNOW WHAT THE POETS MEANT'

BUT,

I AM OCTAVIA'S MAID-SERVANT..

I CARE NOT,

FOR THE LIKES OF OCTAVIA!

SHE IS MY WIFE IN NAME ONLY

I HAVE NEVER EVEN ONCE SHARED A BED WITH HER.

SHE DETESTS ME TOO,

AND LOVES ME NOT.

THE WORLD FOLLOWS MY COMMAND AS IMPERATOR,

BUT NOT A SINGLE PERSON.

FOLLOWS ME AS A MERE MAN

I AM ALL ALONE..

I CONFESS TO YOU,

DEAR ACTE...

THUS, I BEG OF YOU,

THAT I AM LONELY...

WILL YOU BE MY LOVER?

NEXT ITEM!

ALRIGHT,

Chapter 3
Unjust

A YOUNG, SPIRITED WARRIOR,

WHO HAILS FROM THE FIERCE GERMANIC TRIBE, THE CHAUCI!

6000!

5000 SESTERTII!

SPQR

STOP WASTING MY TIME!

NO, NO, NO!

SPQR

7000!

10,000!

I'LL BID,

FINE,

8000!

!!!

*RHENUS. RHINE RIVER

HE'S THE INFAMOUS "WOLF OF RHENUS!"

BEFORE HE COULD BE RESTRAINED!

KILLED 4 ROMAN SOLDIERS ALL BY HIMSELF,

THIS ONE,

I'LL HAVE YOU KNOW,

NO!

ANY TAKERS!?

50,000! NO LESS!

A WARRIOR OF HIS CALIBRE WILL SURELY RECOUP YOUR INVESTMENT IN NO TIME IF PUT TO WORK AS A GLADIATOR!

WHAT A JOKE!

THAT'S WAY TOO HIGH!

50,000!?

HOLD ON A MOMENT.

AHEM

SPQR

IS REALLY WORTH AT LEAST 50,000 SESTERTII...?

YOU CLAIM, THIS SINGLE SLAVE,

HUH?

??

IF SO,

IF HE CAN WIN AGAINST MY GLADIATOR HERE, I'LL GLADLY BUY HIM AT THAT PRICE.

BUT,

IF HE WERE TO LOSE,

YOU'LL GIVE HIM TO ME,

FOR FREE.

YOU WOULDN'T MIND PROVING HIS VALUE RIGHT HERE, WOULD YOU NOW?

IT'S A MATCH BETWEEN GLADI-ATORS!

AT THE SLAVE MARKET!

NO, IT'S NOT!

IT'S A FIGHT!

WHAT'S GOING ON?

IT'S STARTING!

OHH!

THAT'S WHAT I HEARD!

AT THE MARKET?

A MATCH?

7ER CAFES

COS.V ECIT

.....

HE'S FROM SOME GERMANIC TRIBE, RIGHT?

HIS OPPONENT S A KID IN COMPARI-SON.

HE'LL BE BEATEN HALF TO DEATH...

POOR LAD,

THAT'S CRASSUS GLADIATOR.

LEMNOS THE LION KILLER

KID!

YOU'RE FULL OF OPENINGS,

!

.....

NGHH...

TO BE SOLD!

WHEN I'M THROUGH WITH YOU, YOU WON'T BE IN ANY CONDI-TION...

I'LL GET SER OUS THEN.

FINE,

JUST WHAT THE HELL DO YOU THINK YOU'RE DOING IN THE SACRED MARKET PLACE!?

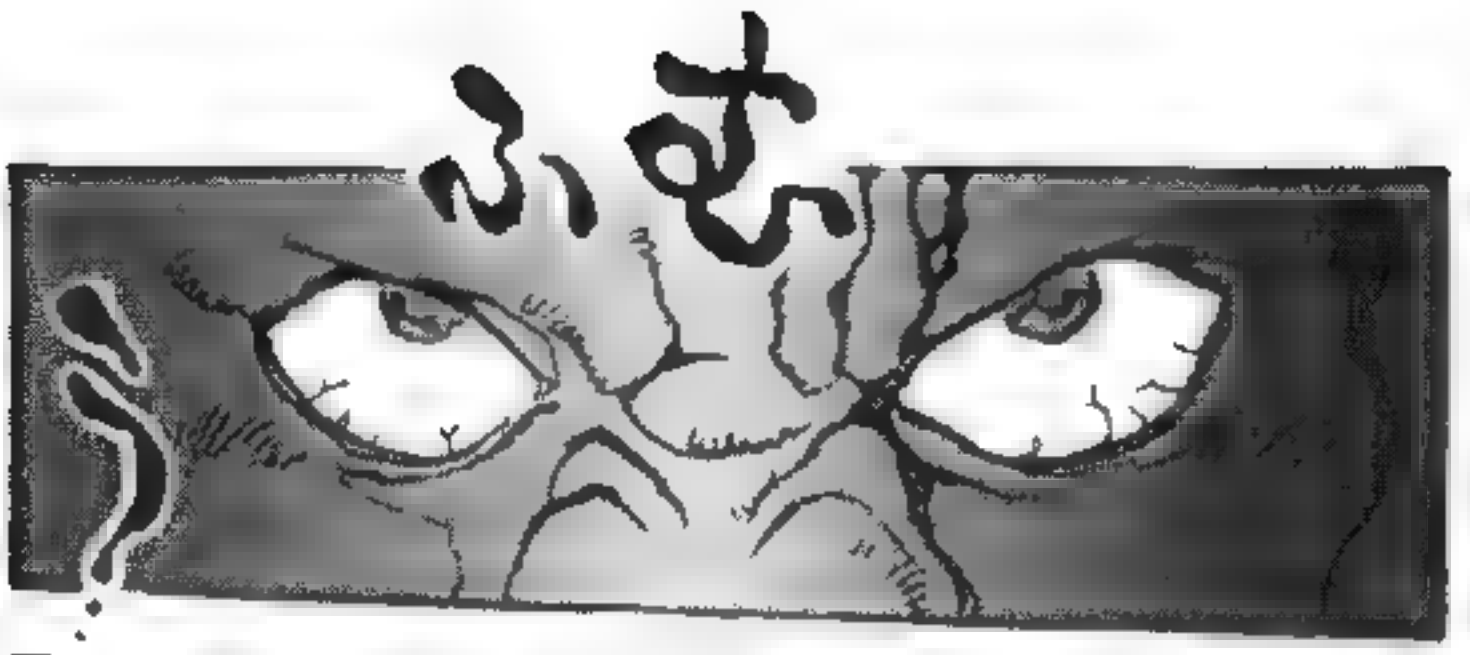
HEY!

HEY!

WHAT'S GOING ON!

MNF-

STOP THIS FIGHT AT ONCE!


STOP!
LEMNOS!
THE BOY'S PROVEN HIS WORTH!
YOU'RE DEAD...
LIMB FROM LIMB!
I'LL TEAR YOU.

KUAAAA!

AGHHHHHH

N-

NO-

I'LL TAKE HIM FOR 50,000 SESTERTII!

SPQR

.....

.....

.....

I...
I'LL BUY HIM!

.....

SENECA!

LISTEN! I HAVE SOMETH NG IMPORTANT TO SAY!

SENECA!

AND..

A PAIR OF SHOES AS WELL.

BEFORE YOU CAN EVEN PUT ON YOUR IMPERIAL ROBES,

WHAT IS THIS URGENT MATTER YOU MUST SPEAK,

AND MARRY ACTE!

I WILL DIVORCE OCTAVIA,

LISTEN!

HAS DECIDED!

NO-

CAESAR

SHE'S NOT A PROPER HIGH-BORN?

BECAUSE SHE'S A FORMER SLAVE?

WHY NOT!?

WILL NOT DO..

THAT,

LINEAGES CAN ALWAYS BE FABRI-CATED!

WHO CARES ABOUT SUCH TR V ALTIES?

ABSO-LUTELY NOT!

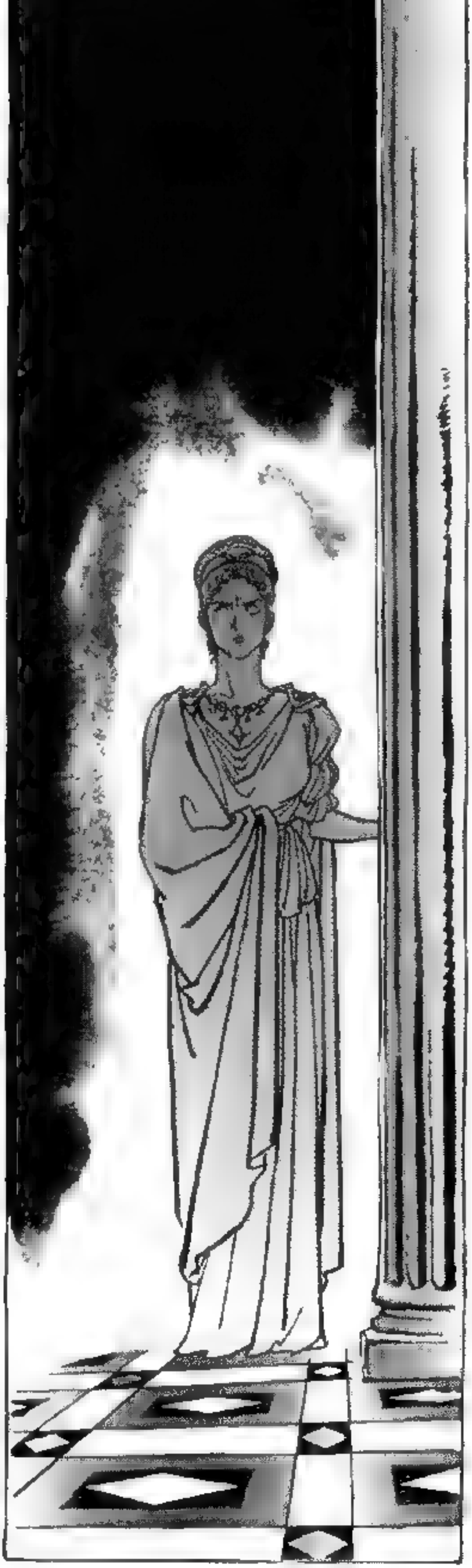
HOW DOES A GREEK NOBLE-WOMAN SOUND?

WHY NOT!?

AS LONG AS THE CAESAR WILLS IT,

HER FAMILY HAD FLED TO SYRIA DUE TO D RE CIRCUM-STANCES, BUT SHE'S A DESCENDANT OF THE ANCIENT CORINTH AN KINGS!

I WILL NOT ALLOW IT!
THIS IS BEYOND ABSURD!
.....
THE CAESAR?
NOT ALLOW? IS THAT AN ORDER? TO ME?



IT WAS ME!

AND WHO WAS IT WHO MADE YOU IMPERATOR?

AND HARDLY PAID A MOMENT'S ATTENTION TO YOU...

YOUR FATHER BUSIED HIMSELF IN DRUKEN DEBAUCHERY,

YOUR FORTUNES AND FUTURE WERE TRULY DARK

SINCE MY BROTHER CALIGULA TURNED MAD DURING HIS REIGN,

TO ENSURE YOUR HAPPI-NESS.

I HAD TO TAKE IT ALL UPON MYSELF.

.....

YOU UNDER-STAND, DON'T YOU, NERO?

COULD HAVE A FUTURE! MY LIFE'S WORK HAS BEEN NOTHING BUT TO MAKE YOU CAESAR!

SO THAT YOU, MY SON,

I GAVE MY BODY TO A MAN I DID NOT LOVE,

SO MUCH HARDSHIP I HAD TO ENDURE IN COURT NG CLAUDIUS' FAVOUR, AS HIS JEALOUS WIFE MESSALINA ALL THE WHILE PLOTTED MY ASSASSINATION...

WHERE DID YOU GET SUCH AN IDEA!?

W-

NERO!

OR MORE ACCURATELY, SO THAT YOU COULD BE A CAESAR'S MOTHER...

YOU WILL NOT FATHER A SUITABLE HEIR OF CAESAR'S BLOOD!

IF YOU DIVORCE OCTAVIA,

I'LL CALL HER BARREN, UNABLE TO BIRTH ANY CHILDREN!

THE SAME GOES FOR OCTAVIA!

YES.

I WILL DO AS I PLEASE!

AS I AM NOW IMPERATOR,

IN ANY CASE,

NO!

YOU HAVE NOT GIVEN HER THE PROPER LOVE A HUSBAND SHOULD!

THAT!

THAT IS BECAUSE,

SHE'S CLEARLY UNABLE TO GIVE ME AN HEIR

AND YET SHE'S STILL NOT PREGNANT, IS SHE NOT?

IT'S BEEN 2 YEARS SINCE WE MARRIED,

DEAREST MOTHER,

COMPARED TO ROME!

AND THE POWER AND GLORY OF COMMANDING THE WORLD!?

WHAT IS LOVE!?

I HAVE NO DESIRE TO SLEEP WITH A COLD WOMAN WHO LOVES ME NOT.

LET ME MAKE THIS CLEAR NOW

FILTHY GIRL,

ALREADY GETTING ON IN HER YEARS!

THAT COARSE,

JUST WHAT YOU SEE IN THAT GIRL!

I CANNOT UNDERSTAND!

I WILL NOT FORGIVE ANY HARM TOWARDS ACTE.

YOU DO REALIZE HOW DISGRACEFUL THIS IS FOR ME, DO YOU NOT?

SOME OF THE GOSSIPY RABBLE ARE CALLING YOU MY GUARDIAN.

ALSO!

NERO...

I CAN MAKE MY OWN CHOICES,

I AM NO LONGER A CHILD!

I WOULD APPRECIATE IT IF YOU DID NOT SHOW YOUR FACE BEFORE ME WHILE I AM MEETING WITH FOREIGN ENVOYS AND PROVINCIAL GOVERNORS!

SO DO NOT INTERFERE!

ABOUT ME IN SUCH A MANNER...

WHEN DID YOU COME TO SPEAK...

BRITANNICUS, TOO, IS NOW NEARLY AN ADULT!

I WILL ADMIT THAT YOU HAVE NOW BECOME YOUR OWN MAN.

NERO,

BUT,

YOU ARE NOT THE ONLY ONE!

AND HE'S QUITE A GOOD YOUTH!

HOLD IT!

BUT IT WAS MY INFLUENCE WHICH PLACED YOU AHEAD OF HIM!

HAD I KNOWN YOU WOULD TURN OUT THIS WAY,

WHILE YOU ARE MERELY CLAUDIUS' ADOPTED SON, HE IS CLAUDIUS' TRUE SON! MANY WOULD EVEN SAY HE SHOULD HAVE BEEN THE RIGHTFUL HEIR!

BRITANNICUS!?

AAAAAAAAAAAAAAA!

BUT PERHAPS IT'S NOT TOO LATE

THAT BOY IS BECOMING FOND OF ME AS OF LATE...

I SHOULD HAVE GIVEN HIM MY LOVE INSTEAD...

.....

BRITANNICUS..

BRITANNICUS IS BECOMING AN ADULT TOO.

...THAT'S RIGHT.

BRITANNICUS

BRITANNICUS

STOP MAKING SUCH A FUSS!

QUIET!

.....

IT'S JUST A MINOR CASE OF THE FITS!

IT'S A REGULAR OCCUR-RENCE FOR HIM!

Chapter 4
A father's shadow

BRITAN-NICUS,

WAS THE GREATEST L.V NG TREASURE THAT MY DEAR STEP-FATHER, CLAUDIUS CAESAR,

LEFT WHEN HE PASSED ON.

I, TOO,

LOVED H M AS A BROTHER.

JUST AS CLAUDIUS LOVED HIM AS A SON,

OF A FAMILY BORN TO THE GREATEST HIGHNESS,

AS I AM NOW THE LAST SURV VING MEMBER,

I CENTER MY REMAINING HOPES IN THE SENATE.

HAVING LOST THIS GREAT PILLAR OF STRENGTH,

I DEARLY HOPE THAT THE SENATE AND PEOPLE OF ROME CAN OFFER THEIR TENDER LOVE AND SUPPORT

PEOPLE OF ROME,

WHO DID NOT DWELL ON PREMATURE DEATHS WITH EXCESSIVE PANEGYRICS OR HYSTERICAL DISPLAYS, I WILL QUICKLY CARRY OUT THE FUNERAL.

IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE CUSTOMS OF OUR ANCESTORS,

SO THAT YOU DO NOT BECOME CONSUMED BY ANGUISH AND SORROW.

FOLLOW MY LEAD AND DO NOT FOREVER GRIEVE FOR MY BROTHER,

NERO...

HE WOULD EVER BECOME CAPABLE OF THIS...

TO THINK,

MY BELOVED,

NERO...

WHAT SHOULD I DO...?

OR...

THAT CHILD KNOWS I POISONED CLAUDIUS...

WILL HE USE THAT SECRET AGAINST ME...?

DOCILE NERO...

REALLY!?

BUT I WARN YOU,

YOU MAY TRY TO HIDE YOUR TRUE IDENTITY, BUT MY EYES ARE NOT DECEIVED.

I KNOW WHO YOU REALLY ARE...

YOU WILL SUCCEED IN PLACING YOUR SON ON THE HIGHEST SEAT IN THIS WORLD...

YOU WILL FIND YOURSELF DONE IN BY HIS HANDS...

IF YOU GROW DISTANT FROM YOUR CHILD'S AFFECTIONS,

CAN BECOME EMPEROR!

AS LONG AS THAT CHILD,

I DO NOT MIND!

EVEN IF I AM TO BE KILLED!

YES!

I WAS NOT MS TAKEN!

AND CAN OBTAIN A LIFE OF HAPPINESS THAT NO ONE CAN TAKE AWAY FROM HIM...

AS LONG AS MY CHILD WILL NOT BE RULED BY OTHERS,

AND THE DAYS OF SUFFERING UNDER THE MURDEROUS WHIMS OF MY BROTHER CALIGULA, THIS IS FAR BETTER!

COMPARED TO THE DAYS OF LIVING IN FEAR UNDER TIBERIUS' TYRANNY,

*AGRIPPINA WAS SEPARATED FROM HER SON AND EXILED DURING CALIGULA'S REIGN

DEFEAT IS NOT AN OPTION! TO LOSE IS TO DIE IN THIS WORLD!

I WILL NOT RELINQUISH THE POWER THAT MY SON NERO OBTAINED AFTER LONG LAST TO ANYONE!

STILL MORE RAIN.

HOW UNPLEASANT

BUT STILL...

SIGH...

THIS RAIN...

IT'S JUST LIKE THAT TIME...

SENECA!

ESPECIALLY IF ONE IS TO PREVENT ANY UNPLEASANT SUSPICIONS...

I ASSURE YOU THERE WAS NOTHING EXCESSIVE IN THAT EULOGY,

SUSPICIONS!?

HAVING TO READ THAT CLOYING PRAISE,

YOUR EULOGY WAS TERRIBLE!

IT WAS FAR TOO EMO-TIONAL!

MADE ME LOOK LIKE A BUFFON!

WHO KILLED THAT WORTH-LESS BRITAN-NICUS!?

DO YOU IMPLY THAT THERE ARE THOSE WHO SUSPECT IT WAS ME,

JUST WHO SUSPECTS WHOM FOR WHAT!?

INFORM BURRUS AND LET HIM DEAL WITH IT.

IF THERE ARE ANY WHO DARES TO UTTER SUCH THOUGHTS,

I WILL SEE TO IT THEY ARE CRUCI-FIED AT CAMPUS MARTIUS!

WHETHER SUCH A FOOL BE A SENATOR OR A SLAVE,

.....

*BURRUS: PREFECT OF THE PRAETORIAN GUARD, AND A PRINCIPAL ADVISOR TO NERO, ALONG W TH SENECA

A FIRST-RATE ROMAN GENERAL.

YES,

IS THAT MAN,

CORBULO?

IT WILL SURELY NOT DO YOU GOOD IN THE FUTURE.

IF YOU ARE TAKEN LIGHTLY BY MILITARY MEN,

YOU ARE IMPERATOR, AFTER ALL.

DO NOT BE NERVOUS.

AHEM.

GNAEUS DOMITIUS CORBULO, COMMANDER OF LEGIO V ALAUDE, LEGIO XVI GALLICA, AND LEGIO I GERMANICA,

HERE TO REPORT BACK,

UPON MY RETURN FROM GERMANIA.

HAIL CAESAR.

GERMANIA IS A PROVINCE DEAR TO MY HEART, AS ITS CONQUEST WAS STARTED UNDER MY GREAT-GRANDFATHER DRUSUS AND CONTINUED BY MY GRANDFATHER GERMANICUS. THANKS TO YOUR EFFORTS, THE PROVINCE HAS BEEN PACIFIED AT LAST.

ON BEHALF OF ALL ROMAN CITIZENS,

I OFFER YOU MY GRATITUDE.

WELL DONE.

I AM SURE YOU WILL GUIDE ROME TO CONTINUED PEACE AND PROSPERITY WITH SOUND ADMINISTRATION.

I WOULD FIRST LIKE TO STATE MY SATISFACTION FOR YOUR ACCESSION TO THE IMPERIAL THRONE.

HOWEVER..

CAESAR

I AM HONOURED,

YOU WISH TO SAY TO ME?

IS THERE ANYTHING,

?

"HOWEVER..."

I COULD NOT HELP BUT LAMENT THE MISTIMED ERA OF MY BIRTH.

UPON RECEIVING CLAUD US' ORDER TO STOP AND W THDRAW THE LEG ONS BACK WEST OF THE RHENUS,

TO EXPAND THE EMPIRE'S BORDERS FARTHER THAN EVER BEFORE.

HAD I BEEN BORN INSTEAD N THE ERA OF JULIUS CAESAR, I WOULD HAVE CROSSED THE RHENUS AND VENTURED DEEP INTO GERMANIA MAGNA,

.....

.....

AUGUSTUS CAESAR'S PEACE MAY BE A PRECIOUS TREASURE FOR WOMEN AND CHILDREN,

BUT FOR A MAN LIKE ME, IT IS ONLY TIRESOME.

HAPPY ARE THE COM- MANDERS WHO FOUGHT FOR THE OLD REPUBLIC!

NERO!

MY DARLING NERO!

NERO!

!

WHAT ARE OF NO CONCERN TO ME!

WOMEN AND CHILDREN,

IS REALLY MY CHILD OR NOT!?

HOW DO I EVEN KNOW IF THIS BOY,

AND EVEN IF HE WERE MY SON,

ANY CHILD BORN BETWEEN AGRIPPINA AND ME,

WOULD ONLY BE A MONSTER AND A PUBLIC DANGER!

HA HA HA HA HA

COME IN HERE!

IS THAT YOU, SENECA?

WHO'S THERE!?

CORBULO TO ARMENIA?

WHY NOT SEND

I'LL SEND HIM TO DEAL WITH THE ARMENIAN PROBLEM!

YES, I THINK I WILL!

I BEG YOUR PARDON!?

I...

.....

SILENCE!

GIVING CONTROL OF THE EASTERN LEGIONS TO CORBULO, A COMMANDER OF THE WESTERN LEGIONS,

ARMENIA IS A MATTER WHICH SHOULD BE HANDLED BY THE SYRIAN GOVERNOR AND HIS EASTERN LEGIONS!

WILL ONLY CAUSE QUADRATUS, THE SYRIAN GOVERNOR, TO LOSE FACE!

HE IS SURE TO START A FULL-BLOWN WAR WITH PARTHIA!

I STRONGLY ADVISE AGAINST THAT!

MORE-OVER,

I WANT THAT BOOR AS FAR AWAY FROM ME AS POSSIBLE!

MORE OVER,

QUADRATUS' PRIDE IS NOT MY CONCERN!

I WILL NOT STAND FOR A MAN LIKE HIM,

THAT CORBULO ONLY BRINGS ME UNPLESANT MEMORIES OF MY FATHER!

TO LINGER IN MY ROME!

.....

WITH THE CAESAR'S FEELINGS

I SYMPA-THIZE.

NERO'S ORIGINAL NAME IS "LUCIUS DOMITIUS AHENOBARBUS."
HE LATER TOOK THE NAME "NERO CLAUDIUS CAESAR DRUSUS GERMANICUS."

PETRONIUS!

BUT BURDENED WITH THE TASK OF SUPPORTING A WORLD EMPIRE-

YOU ARE STILL A YOUTH,

SIMPLY CALL ME GERMANICUS

FOR TODAY AT LEAST,

DO NOT ADDRESS ME THAT WAY.

I'M VENTURING THE CITY IN SECRET TODAY.

PETRONIUS

I REALLY DETEST THE RABBLE.

100

AGHHH!

I'M PENT UP WITH STRESS!

ISN'T THERE ANY-THING FUN WE CAN DO,

TO LET SOME STEAM OFF?

IN THE END,

THEY'RE ALL A BUNCH OF SIMPLETONS SATISFIED AS LONG AS THERE ARE BREAD, CIRCUSES, AND BATHS

TO AVOID EVER HAVING TO ADMIT FAULTS OR MISTAKES.

THEY HIDE UNDER THE GUISE OF THE AMORPHOUS "MASSES."

IF YOU WERE TO ASK SOMETHING FROM THEM IN RETURN, THEY CRY OUT LIKE VICTIMS.

AND,

THEY ASK FOR EVERYTHING FROM STATESMEN, YET ACT AS IF THEY HAD OBTA NED IT ALL BY THEIR OWN TWO HANDS.

AND IGNORANT OF ART.

THE MASSES ARE SELFISH

GREEDY,

THEY DON'T REALLY RESPECT THE CAESAR.

THEY ONLY SAY THEY LIKE THE CAESAR WHEN THEY DISLIKE THE MAGISTRATES THEY ELECTED.

HE DID LOWER TAXES TOO!

DON' CHA THINK?

HE'S DOING PRETTY WELL DESPITE HIS AGE,

WHO?

NERO?

WHAT, DO YOU MAKE OF HIM?

BY THE WAY,

IT MEANS HE'S GOT A KEEN UNDER-STANDING OF POLITICS!

NO, NO.

NAH, THAT MUST HAVE ALL BEEN SENECA'S IDEA!

HE'S CERTAINLY NOT A COWARD WHO'D BACK DOWN FROM A THREAT

HE EVEN SENT GENERAL CORBULO TO DEAL WITH THE ARMENIAN SITUATION.

WELL, ANYONE'S BETTER THAN CALIGULA.

IN ANY CASE, HE'S FAR BETTER THAN CALIGULA AND CLAUDIUS FOR SURE.

OH THAT?

WHAT ABOUT THE THING WITH BRITANNICUS THOUGH?

NERO KILLED HIM.

AIN'T IT, OBVIOUS?

EASY THERE...

YOU ARE VENTUR-ING THE CITY IN SECRET, AFTER ALL...

I OUGHT TO EXECUTE,

IDIOTS WHO RUN THEIR MOUTHS OFF LIKE THAT!

THIS IS EXACTLY WHY I HATE THE RABBLE!

AND SIMPLE.

HOW BARBARIC.

ENTER-TAINMENT FOR THE MASSES.

THEY'RE ALL A BUNCH OF DEVIANTS.

IF YOU ASK ME,

ROMAN CITIZENS ARE JUST TOO MAD FOR BLOOD AND GORE.

PETRONIUS,

AS LONG AS ITS CITIZENS LAP UP GORE-FESTS LIKE THESE?

DON'T YOU ALSO THINK THAT ROME WILL FOREVER BE CULTUR-ALLY INFERIOR,

THEY'RE NOTHING OF THE SORT.

NOW TAKE THE GREEKS IN CONTRAST.

MUSIC,

THEY LOVE POETRY,

AND KNOW HOW TO APPRECIATE A DEEP TRAGEDY

TO KILL HIM...?

WAS THERE REALLY A NEED.

UGH...

"THE FIGHT STOPS WHEN A VICTOR IS DECIDED."

I OUGHT TO CHANGE THE RULES FOR THESE GAMES!

"THE KILLING OF LOSERS IS FOR-BIDDEN."

THAT'S THE SENATOR MARIUS.

WHO'S SITTING IN THE SPONSOR'S SEAT?

HE'S A RUTHLESS ONE, ALRIGHT

I'LL REMEMBER THAT!

WHO'S HE?
W-
THAT GLADI-ATOR WHO JUST CAME OUT

.....
HE'S QUITE POPULAR WITH THE LADIES R GHT NOW.
HE'S WON 10 STRAIGHT MATCHES SINCE H S DEBUT
HE'S A SLAVE CAPTURED FROM GERMANIA.
THAT'S THE WOLF OF RHENUS.

A GERMANUS...?

BUT,

THE WOLF HAS A TOUGH BATTLE AHEAD OF HIM TODAY

HE'S UP AGAINST THAT NOTORIOUS GLADIATOR.

IT'LL BE THE WOLF'S FIRST TIME AGAINST HIM.

Chapter 5
Warrior and Emperor

THAT THAT GERMANIC WOLF...

I WAGER,

CARE FOR A BET?

WILL LOSE.

I'M NOT GOING TO DIE HERE!

LISTEN UP WHILE YOU DRINK!

LISTEN UP WHILE YOU EAT!

ALL THE WORLD'S DESIRES ARE HERE IN THE ETERNAL CITY!

IN ROME,

ONE CAN OBTAIN ANYTHING!

DO YOU KNOW HOW MUCH A THRACIAN GLADIATOR EARNED FROM WINNING THE GAMES HOSTED LAST WEEK BY VITELLIUS!?

ONE!

HUNDRED!

THOUSAND!

SESTERTII!

HE'S NOW A RICH FREE MAN!

WITH HIS 70 VICTORIES, HE LIKELY HAD AMASSED OVER A MILLION SESTERTII!

THAT IS ONLY IF YOU WIN!

SO FIGHT!

AND WIN!

HOWEVER-

OR LIVE A LIFE OF LUXURY AND PLEASURE BY OWNING VAST TRACTS OF LANDS IN THE EMPIRE'S PROVINCES!

IF YOU SO DESIRE, YOU CAN EVEN BECOME A SENATOR LIKE ME!

SHUT UP!

HAS MET HIS WORST MATCH.

I'M AFRAID THE NOVICE WOLF..

THAT'S A FIRST-RATE GLADIATOR WITH 50 WINS.

SEE THAT?

HE'S SO SWIFT!

LOUD-MOUTHED IDIOT!

WHAT K ND OF PERSON WOULD FIGHT FOR SUCH REASONS!?

THERE!

AN OPENING!

TO AVENGE MY PEOPLE!

I'LL F GHT...

THE ROTTEN ERRS OF YOUR WAYS!

AND I'LL MAKE YOU ROMANS REGRET...

NGHHH!
UGH!

.....

Ah!

Ah!

Ah!

STOP

FROM ME!

THAT IS AN ORDER,

I WILL NOT PERMIT,

I AM NERO CAESAR AUGUSTUS!

THE EXECUTION OF THAT MAN!

MARIUS!

AS LONG AS I AM HERE, YOU WILL NOT DO AS YOU WISH!

EVEN IF YOU ARE THE SPONSOR OF TODAY'S GAMES,

IS THAT CLEAR!?

THIS IS MY VERDICT FOR HIM!

LET HIM LIVE!

NERO...!?

NERO...!?

IS THE ROMAN EMPEROR,

THAT,

.....

.....

AT ONCE!

ENOUGH! STOP IT WITH YOUR ABSURD EXAGGERA-TIONS,

YOU THINK YOU CAN TAKE ADVAN-TAGE OF US, AND TURN A PROFIT, DO YOU!?

JUST WHO DO YOU THINK YOU'RE DEALING WITH!?

.....

DO YOU EXPECT ME TO BELIEVE THAT!?

100,000 SESTERTII FOR A SLAVE!?

HOW DOES, 300,000 SESTERTII SOUND?

IN FACT, I'LL EVEN DOUBLE HIS ASKING PRICE.

DON'T CARE

HE CLAIMS HE BOUGHT THE SLAVE FOR 100,000 SO HE WANTS 150,000?

!!!!!!!!!!

ARE YOU STILL NOT DONE!?

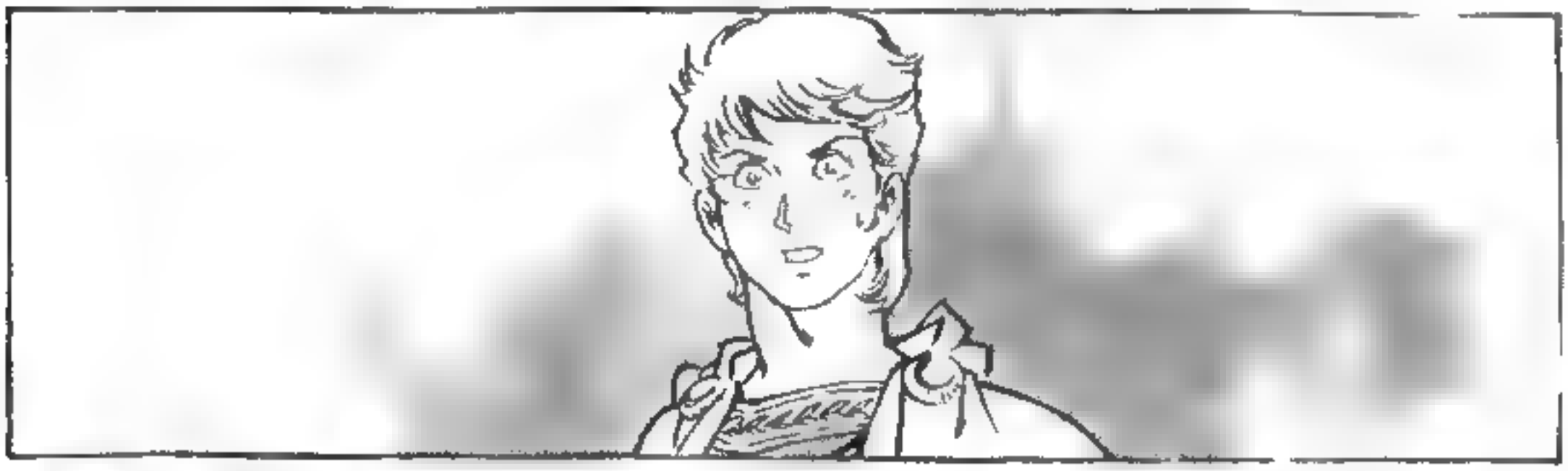
IF YOU DON'T OFFER A REAS-

NOW THEN,

WHERE IS HE!?

THAT I JUST BOUGHT!?

WHERE IS THE GERMANUS,



THERE HE IS... HECTOR!

THE WOLF WHO WAS THE BANE OF MY ROMAN LEGIONS FIGHTING IN DISTANT BARBARIAN LANDS!

NERO IS MAKING AN ANALOGY BETWEEN HIS ROMAN LEGIONS IN GERMANIA AND THE GREEKS SAILING ALL THE WAY TO TROY TO FIGHT HECTOR AND THE TROJANS.

WELL, HE IS A BAR-BARIAN.

DO NOT WISH TO RISK ANY HARM TO YOU

WE,

WHAT'S THE MEANING OF THIS!?

WHY IS HE TIED UP IN CHAINS!?

HM?

FREE HIS CHA NS AT ONCE!

A NEEDLESS WORRY!

YOU WILL ATTEND MY LUDUS GLADITORIUS.

FROM TODAY,

WOLF,

YOU WILL LIVE HERE AT THE CAESAR'S PALACE,

AND SERVE ME DIRECTLY

BUT THERE IS NO NEED FOR YOU TO LIVE AND SLEEP THERE AS WELL.

LUDUS GLADITORIUS: TRAINING SCHOOL/GYM FOR GLADIATORS

OF COURSE HE DOES.

HAS A FONDNESS FOR MALES AS WELL?

COULD IT BE THAT OUR CAESAR,

OH DEAR.

IN FACT, THIS IS QUITE HEALTHY BEHAVIOUR.

NO MAN OF JULIUS CAESAR'S BLOOD DID NOT KNOW HOW TO APRRECIATE THE ROUGHER SEX IN ADDITION TO THE FAIRER SEX

IS QUITE CUTE.

COMPARED TO T BER US' PENCHANT FOR PEDOPHILIA OR CALIGULA'S FETISH FOR INCEST, OUR CAESAR FALLING AT FIRST SIGHT TO A STRAPPING GLAD ATOR,

IT SEEMS ROME'S PROS- PER TY,

I'D SAY TH S IS FAR BETTER THAN HIM TRYING TO AFFECT A PURE LOVE FOR THAT GIRL ACTE,

IN FACT,

WILL CONTINUE FOR THE TIME BEING.

WHERE THE WATER S TOO CLEAN.

NO FISH CAN LIVE,

YOU DO HAVE A POINT

HMM,

WHO'S TOO SERIOUS FOR HER OWN GOOD.

FOR DEBAUCHERY AS OF LATE, IT SEEMS.

NERO HAS DEVELOPED A TASTE,

I HEARD HE EVEN LET SOME GLADIATOR HE SAW FOR THE F RST TIME AT AN ARENA INTO H S PALACE...

A freedman as well as Agrippina's loyal ally and former lover.

MOST RECENTLY,

EVEN GOING SO FAR AS TO ENTER THE PUBLIC BATHS.

Secretary of the Treasury Pallas

HE'S BEEN DRESSING UP AS A COMMONER AND WANDERING THE CITY FREQUENTLY,

.....

I HAD THOUGHT OF H M AS A DOCILE CHILD UNTIL NOW,

ANOTHER CURIOUS THING.

AH,

I ALSO HEARD,

BUT POWER

DOES INDEED SEEM TO CHANGE A PERSON'S CHARACTER...

WORD IS THAT SHE'S A CHR STIAN.

THAT GIRL WHOM NERO FANCIES... THE FREEDWOMAN CALLED ACTE...

IS THAT TRUE?

WHAT!

A FAIRLY RELIABLE SOURCE INFORMED ME THUS,

SO IT IS LIKELY

BRING ACTE HERE AT ONCE!

SERVANTS!

.....

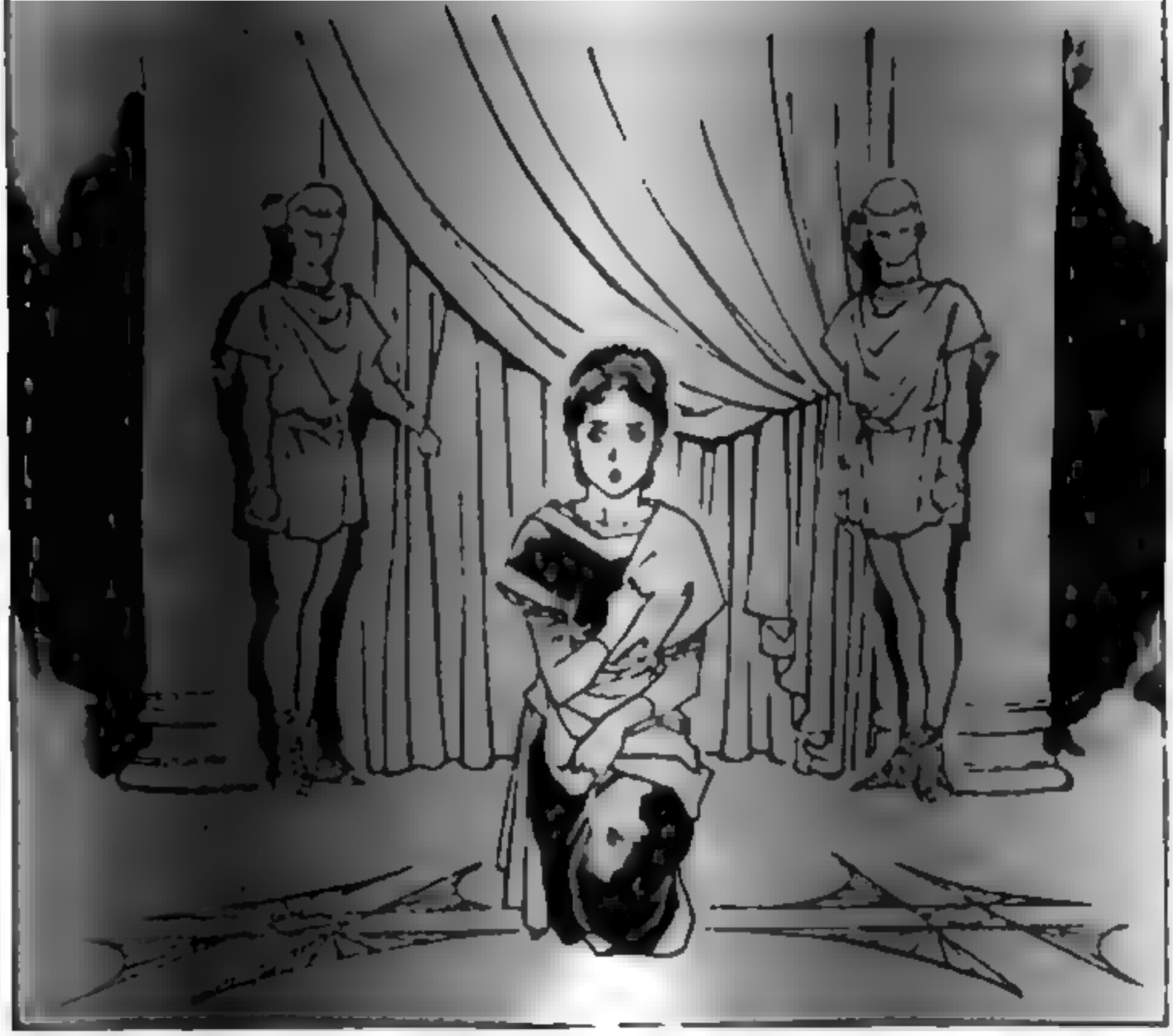
SOME SPREAD THE HERETICAL BELIEF OF WOR-SHIPPING CHRIST

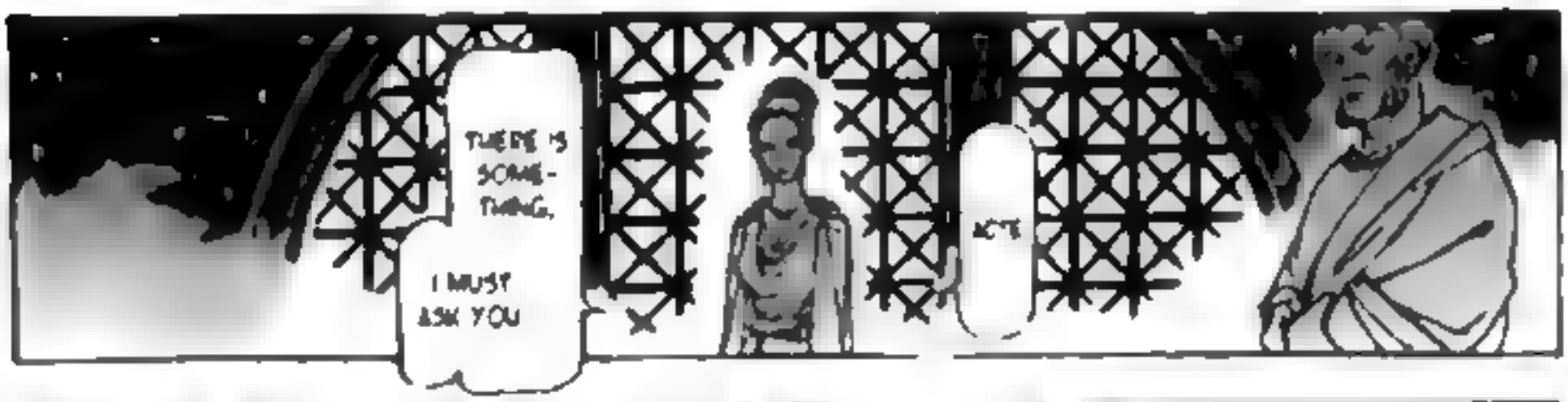
AND AMONG THE R NJMBERS,

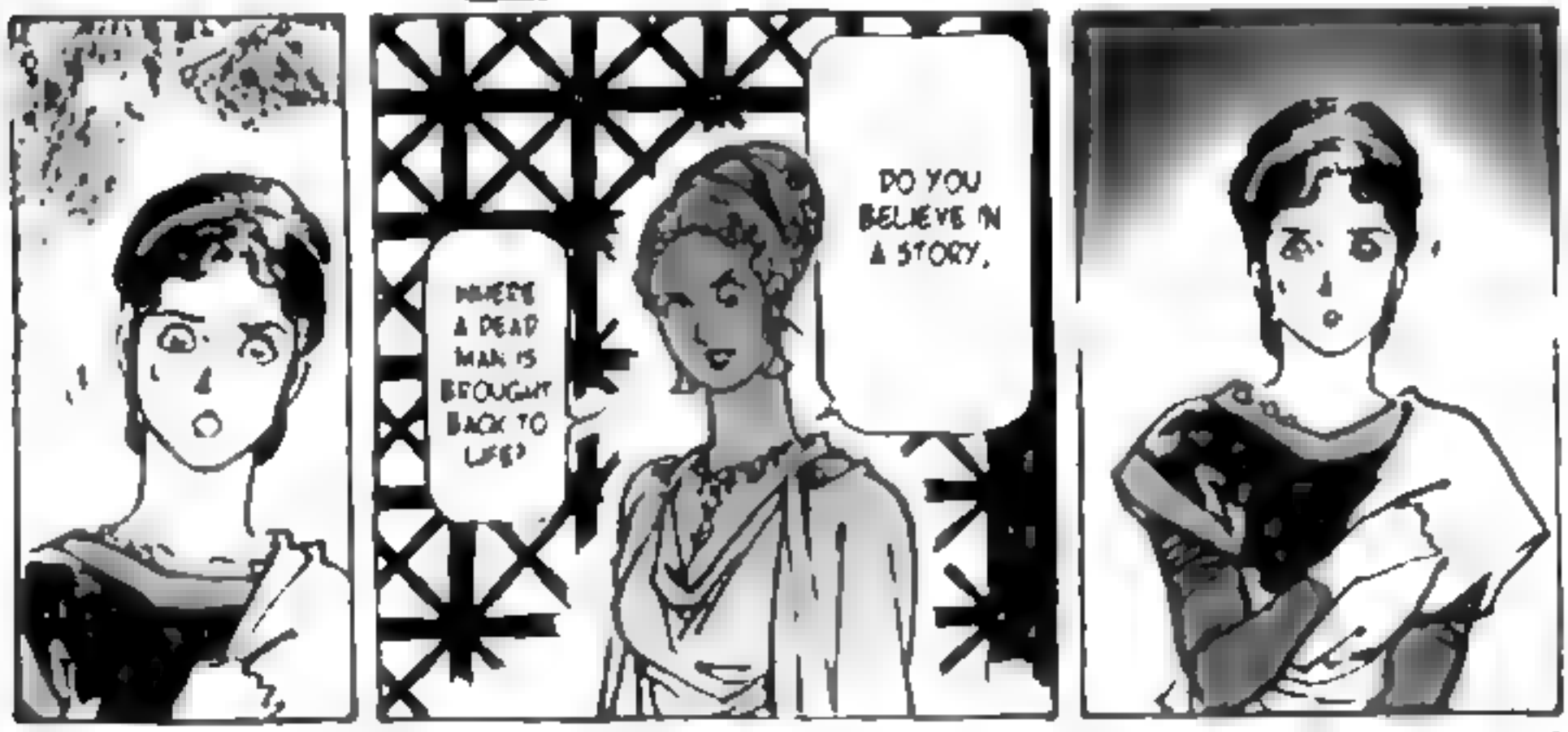
THERE HAS BEEN AN INCREAS-ING NJMBER OF JEWS IN RECENT TIMES.

IT IS,

QUITE A LAMENT-ABLE SITUATION.




THERE IS SOME-THING,
I MUST ASK YOU
ACT?


WHERE A DEAD MAN IS BROUGHT BACK TO LIFE?
DO YOU BELIEVE IN A STORY.

AND FEASTED UPON HUMAN FLESH!?

HAVE YOU EVER DRUNK HUMAN BLOOD,

DO YOU BELIEVE IN MAGIC THAT CAN CURE THE PERMANENTLY ILL AND TURN STONES INTO BREAD?

ACTE!

ANSWER ME!

BUT HAVE YOU YOURSELF EVER BEEN THERE AS WELL?

IT SEEMS SOME OF YOUR ACQUAINT-ANCES GATHER IN THE CATA-COMBS AT NIGHT,

.....
WAS SOMEHOW DECEIVED BY THE LIKES OF YOU, BUT..
UP UNTIL NOW, I DIDN'T MAKE TOO MUCH OF THE FACT THAT MY CHILD, DESPITE BEING NO FOOL,

YOU SEDUCED HIM USING BLACK MAGIC FROM YOUR DEVIANT FAITH, DIDN'T YOU!?

IF YOU WILL NOT SHOW ME WILLINGLY,

THEN I WILL STRIP YOU BARE!

I HEAR CHRISTIANS BRAND THEMSELVES A CROSS-SHAPED MARK ON THE R CHESTS!

SO LET ME SEE!

LET'S SEE YOU BARE YOUR CHEST!

NOW THEN!

STOP!

OCTAVIA...

OCTAVIA

DO NOT TORTURE HER

ACTE IS MY DEAR SERVANT GIRL.

YOUR HUSBAND NERO!

SHE'S TRYING TO TAKE NERO FOR HERSELF!

DON'T YOU YOURSELF WANT TO KNOW WHAT TH S GIRL IS UP TO!?

MORE THAN ME,

IF NERO LIKES HER,

THAN SO BE IT

DESPITE HAVING NO MERITS OF HER OWN!

BEFORE YOUR VERY EYES!

SHE'LL STEAL YOUR SEAT AS EMPRESS IN DUE TIME!

NO...!

YOU CANNOT ALLOW THIS!

.....

LADY OCTAVIA!

IT WAS NOT MY DESIRE...

TO BE BORN AS CLAUDIUS' DAUGHTER...

IF THIS,

IS...

WHAT WILL FINALLY MAKE ME INTO A NORMAL WOMAN,

THAN I COULD NOT BE HAPPIER

DID WHAT TO ACTE!?

MY MOTHER,

THIS MEANS WAR!

SUMMON BURRUS AT ONCE!

SENECA!

IS THAT TRUE!?

!!

MY MOTHER,

AND PALLAS!

A-

AGAINST WHOM!?

WAR!?

IS THAT NOT OBVIOUS?

WHO HOLDS THE REAL POWER IN ROME!

IT'S ABOUT TIME I SHOW EVERYONE,

ISN'T THIS AN INTERESTING CHALLENGE!?

Chapter 6
Poppaea's Allure

DO NOT RESIST THE PRAETORIAN GUARD!

LAY DOWN YOUR ARMS!

AHH!

KYAA!

KYAAA!

BURRUS

PRAETORIAN PREFECT

HAVE HAD THEIR WEAPONS CONFIS-CATED!

ALL OF AGRIPPINA'S GUARDS,

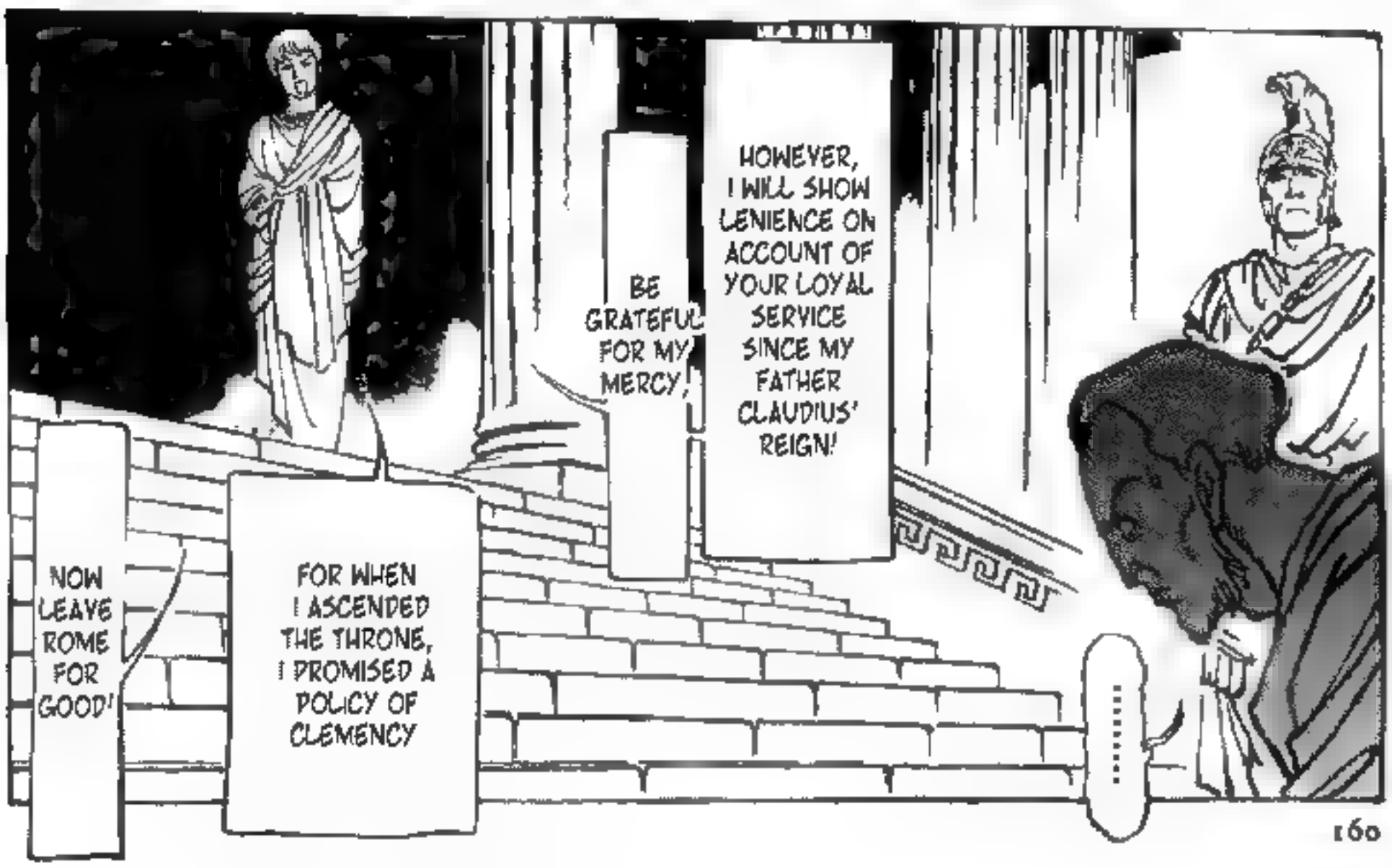
THE PRAETORIAN GUARD HAS COMPLETED ITS TASK!

GOOD.

YOU DID WELL TO SUBMIT BEFORE ME WITHOUT RESISTING.
DALLAS!

WERE IT ANY OTHER PERSON, I WOULD HAVE HAD YOU DRINK HEMLOCK BY NOW!
WATCH YOUR MOUTH!

ON WHAT CHARGES HAVE I EARNED THE CAESAR'S WRATH? I BELIEVE I AM GUILTY OF NOTHING-
MAY I ASK,


NOW LEAVE ROME FOR GOOD!
FOR WHEN I ASCENDED THE THRONE, I PROMISED A POLICY OF CLEMENCY
BE GRATEFUL FOR MY MERCY,
HOWEVER, I WILL SHOW LENIENCE ON ACCOUNT OF YOUR LOYAL SERVICE SINCE MY FATHER CLAUDIUS' REIGN!

IS NOW OVER.

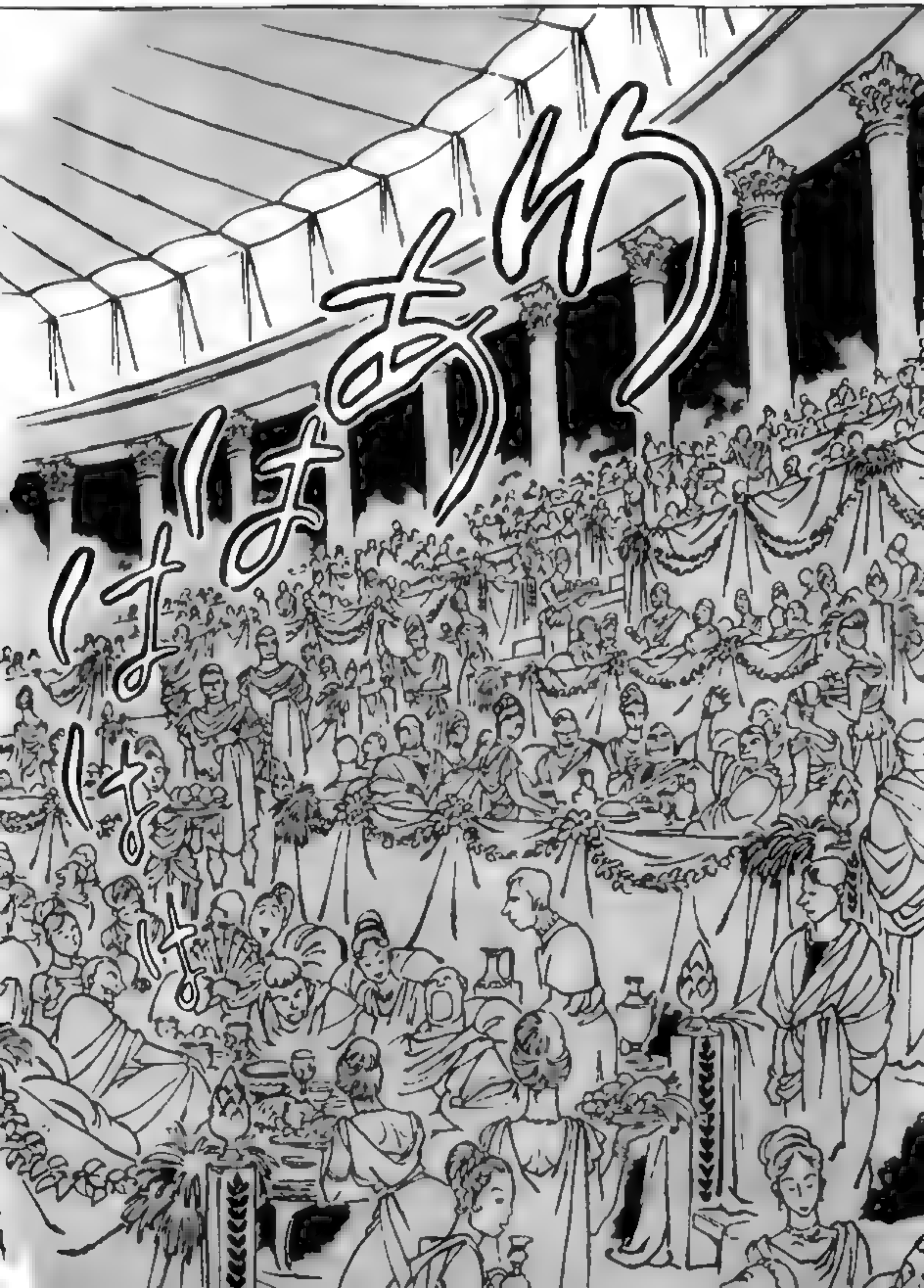
YOUR WORK AS MY MOTHER'S AIDE,

YOU MAY TAKE EVERYTHING NOT RELATED TO YOUR FORMER POST AS TREASURER WITH YOU.

AH-HH...

YOU REALLY ARE A...

NERO...



THERE'S NARY A MAN NOR WOMAN WHO SEEMS BORED

I PRAISE YOU FOR THE GRAND FESTIVITIES.

CAESAR

DO NOT SPEAK ABOUT MY 'MOTHER,'

EVER AGAIN!

AND MAY I ASK WHERE AGRIP-PINA S TODAY?

OH,

SHE PROBABLY LEFT FOR HER VILLA NEAR BAIAE WHERE THE WEATHER IS N-

I'D GUESS.

SHE HAS MOVED OUT FROM THE PALACE TO LIVE AT HER OWN RESIDENCE.

AND THE CROWD COULDN'T BE MORE EXCITED...

IT'S JUST ABOUT TIME FOR THE GLADIA-TORIAL CONTEST.

CAESAR!

THERE ARE ALWAYS A FEW OF DULL-WITT WHO ARE RATHER SLOW ON THE UPTAKE ABOUT POLITICS.

PAY NO MIND TO HIM.

BEHOLD!

THOSE CRASS FIGHTS ARE BENEATH ME! I'LL SHOW YOU SOMETHING MORE REFINED!

HMPH.

ズ"

ズ"

ズ"

ズ"

ズ"

ズ"

お!

お!

お!

CHATTER CHATTER
ISN'T IT THE ODYSSEY?
WHAT IS THIS, THE ARGONAUTICA?
THE THRILLING TALE,
OF OUR ANCESTORS!
BEHOLD!
CITIZENS OF ROME!

HAVE YOU HEARD OF AENEAS, BORN FROM VENUS' WOMB,

AND THE ANCESTOR OF US ROMANS?

HIS FATHER WAS NONE OTHER THAN ANCHISES, A MEMBER OF THE TROJAN ROYAL FAMILY, AND DEAR FRIEND TO PARIS!

YOU WILL LEAD YOUR GROUP, THE AENEADS, ACROSS ROUGH SEAS,

YOU WILL PLAY THE PART OF AENEAS!

AND FIGHT BEASTS AND BARBARIANS IN DISTANT LANDS!

TOOK TO THE SEAS,

AENEAS, RECEIVING VENUS' PROTECTION,

AFTER THE FALL OF TROY,

THE AMPHI-THEATRE WILL BE FILLED WITH ROMAN PATRICIANS!

THIS IS THE PERFECT DAY!

SO DO A GOOD JOB!

IN SEARCH FOR A NEW HOME.

OHHH!

!!

OHHH !!!

IT LOOKS JUST LIKE THE REAL THING!

INCRED-IBLE!

OH?

IT CAN'T FLOAT PROPERLY

THE WATER MUST BE TOO SHALLOW.

THE SHIP SEEMS TO BE MORE FLAILING THAN SAILING...

BUT...

THIS IS QUITE A PERFORMANCE.

OH MY!

THIS STAGE IS TOO SMALL TO BRING OUT MY TRUE ARTISTIC VISION!

THIS IS NO GOOD!

ENOUGH!

NEXT PART!

I'VE DECIDED!

PETRON US!

THERE, I WILL RECREATE THE BATTLE OF ACTIUM...

A PLACE NOT JUST FOR PATRICIANS AND EQUITES,

BUT GRAND ENOUGH TO HOUSE NEARLY ALL CITIZENS OF ROME.

I'LL BUILD A GREAT AMPHITHEATRE!

'BATTLE OF ACTIUM: THE DECISIVE NAVAL BATTLE BETWEEN OCTAVIAN (AUGUSTUS) AND THE ALLIED FORCES OF MARC ANTONY AND CLEOPATRA

LIONS ARE FIERCE BEASTS.

THERE AREN'T ANY LIONS IN THE FORESTS OF RHENJS, RIGHT?

A WOLF!

BUT THE GUARDIAN ANIMAL OF ROME IS THE WOLF!

WOLF OF RHENUS, YOU WILL TAKE THE NAME REMUS!

REMUS, THE TWIN BROTHER TO ROMULUS, KING OF THE ROMANS!

YOU ARE NO LONGER A SLAVE FROM GERMANIA!

YOU ARE MY BROTHER!

THE LION,

IS THE HATED ENEMY OF YOU AND I!

KILL!

KILL THAT FOUL BEAST!

THROWN OUT TO THE WILDERNESS ON THE ORDERS OF KING AMULIUS,

WE SURVIVED BY DRINKING FROM THE TEATS OF A WOLF AT THE BASE OF PALATINE HILL!

Has the crime of abducting Helen not already been compensated by the blood of Troy's people?

Will only endless suffering come of your arduous trials?

Ohhh, Aeneas!

Or will they serve as the foundation stone of the Eternal City?

The hero who survived Troy's fall and his cmpanions!

Romulus and Remus, the outcome of their union... Too precious to be forsaken to death upon their birth.

'Was Venus' figure reflected in your image that fateful night you were seduced by Mars, Silvia?

As certain as the judgment of the gods proclaimed down from Sibyl's rock

The passage of time has shown the stakes driven in Latium's fields did not mark the walls of Alba Longa, but rather that of here.

For this great city and its enlightened laws, your father is Mars, the god of war!

Are the proud descendants of Mars' seed and Silvia's blood!

We, the rulers of today's world,

Rife with petty t...

To think that the world of mortals.

WIFE OF OTHO.

I AM POPPAEA,

WHO ARE YOU?

OTHO'S...?

O...

EXCUSE ME FOR THE LATE INTRO-DUCTIONS...

AH, CAESAR,

I WON'T BORE YOU WITH THE LONG STORY, BUT I MANAGED TO MAKE HER MY WIFE AFTER THEIR DIVORCE.

HE WAS! HER FIRST HUSBAND.

DO YOU REMEMBER THE FORMER PRAETORIAN PREFECT, RUFRIUS?

I'D BE HAPPY TO LET YOU PLAY WITH HER...

IF YOU WISH.

SHE'S A LOT MORE FUN THAN THAT FRIGID ACTE, YOU KNOW.

G-

SO YOU'RE POPPAEA?

GLAD TO MEET YOU!

HEY.

DID YOU HEAR?

HE WAS PROMOTED TO THE GOVERN-ORSHIP OF LUSITANIA.

YOU'VE GOT IT ALL WRONG.

SEEMS SO.

OTHO GOT DEMOTED.

[1]LUSITANIA: ROMAN PROVINCE OF WHAT IS ROUGHLY NOW MODERN-DAY PORTUGAL

HE SURE IS SOME-THING.

GOVERNOR AT 26?

26, I THINK?

HOW OLD IS OTHO?

WHAT A DUMB-ASS!

TO NERO?

I HEARD IT'S BECAUSE HE SHOWED OFF HIS WIFE AT THE AMPHITHEATRE!

BUT IT'S ONLY LUSITANIA.

YEAH,

TRUE,

THAT'S LIKE BEING SENT TO THE EDGE OF THE WORLD

DUH!

Y'THINK SHE'S AIMING TO BE A CAESAR'S WIFE,

DO YA?

I RECKON

SHE'S PULLING AN AGRIPPINA.

THAT POPPAEA IS QUITE THE LOOKER

GOTTA SAY THOUGH,

AFTER ALL THAT EFFORT HE PUT TO MAKE HER HIS WOMAN.

AHH!
AHN!
AHH!
YES!
IF YOU PREFER OTHO.
OH, I DON'T M ND,
WERE YOU NOT THE ONE WHO TOLD ME TO STAY...?
DO YOU NOT WISH TO GO WITH H M?
OTHO IS LEAV NG FOR LUSITANIA TOMORROW.

AND LOVES ME SINCERELY.

HE'S KIND,

OTHO IS A GOOD MAN.

YOU LIE.

AND I BET I CAN GIVE OTHO A RUN FOR HIS MONEY WHEN IT COMES TO GIVING YOU LOVE.

I'M NICE TOO.

NO!

SHE'S JUST A-

THAT'S NOT TRUE.

AGRIPPINA WOULD NOT ALLOW IT!

AS LONG AS YOU ARE CAESAR,

YOU CANNOT MARRY ME,

FOR OCTAVIA STILL EXISTS.

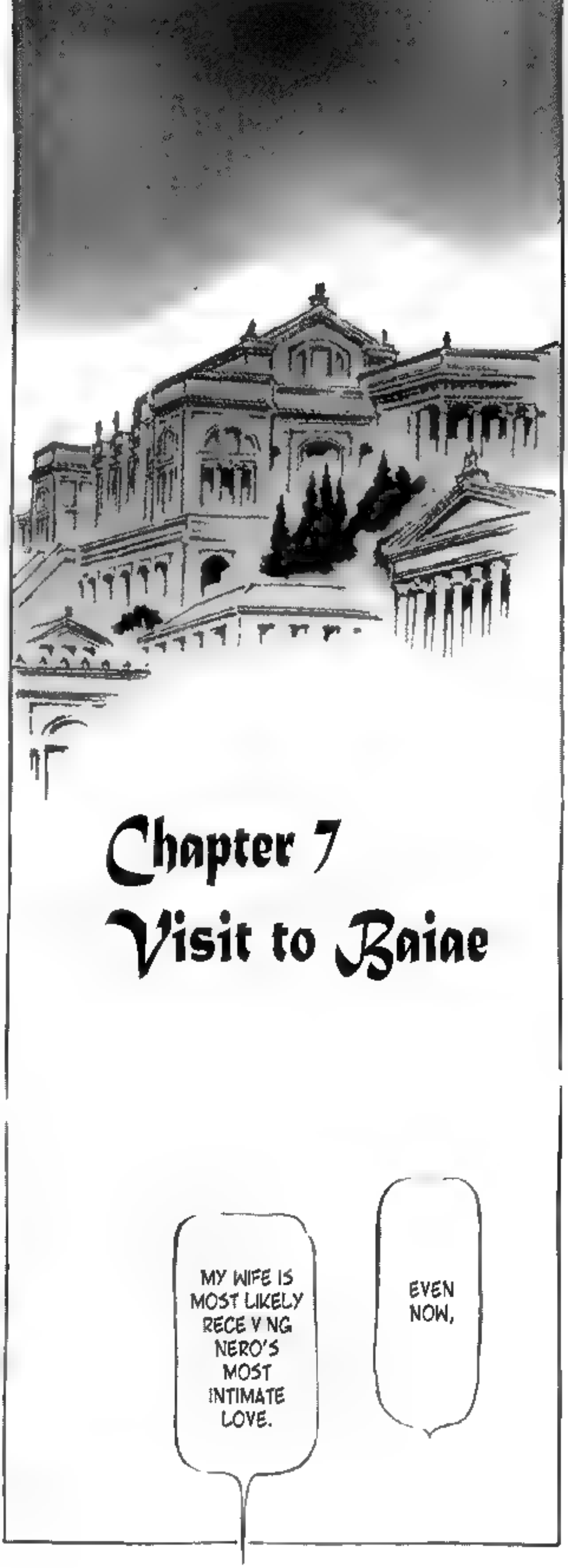
AND THAT YOU ARE STILL DANCING ON AGRIPPINA'S PALM IN THE END, UNWITTINGLY OR NOT.

BUT THERE ARE MANY WHO THINK THAT YOU HAVE YET TO GROW COMPLETELY INDEPENDENT FROM YOUR MOTHER.

FORGIVE ME FOR SAYING THIS,

CAN YOU REALLY MARRY ME...?

IF YOU THINK WHAT I SAY TO BE FALSE, CAN YOU REALLY DO IT?


PETRONIUS.
TAKE PITY ON THIS MARCUS SALVIUS OTHO, WHO WAS CUCK-OLDED AND SENT TO GOVERN THE REMOTE LANDS OF LUSITANIA.
MY WIFE IS MOST LIKELY RECEIVING NERO'S MOST INTIMATE LOVE.
EVEN NOW,

Chapter 7
Visit to Baiae

UNDER THE TYRANTS OF JULIUS CAESAR'S BLOODLINE!

YOU WILL NOT PROSPER.

I DECLARE TO ROME AND HER CITIZENS!

.....

PETRONIUS!

DON'T BE SO SCARED.

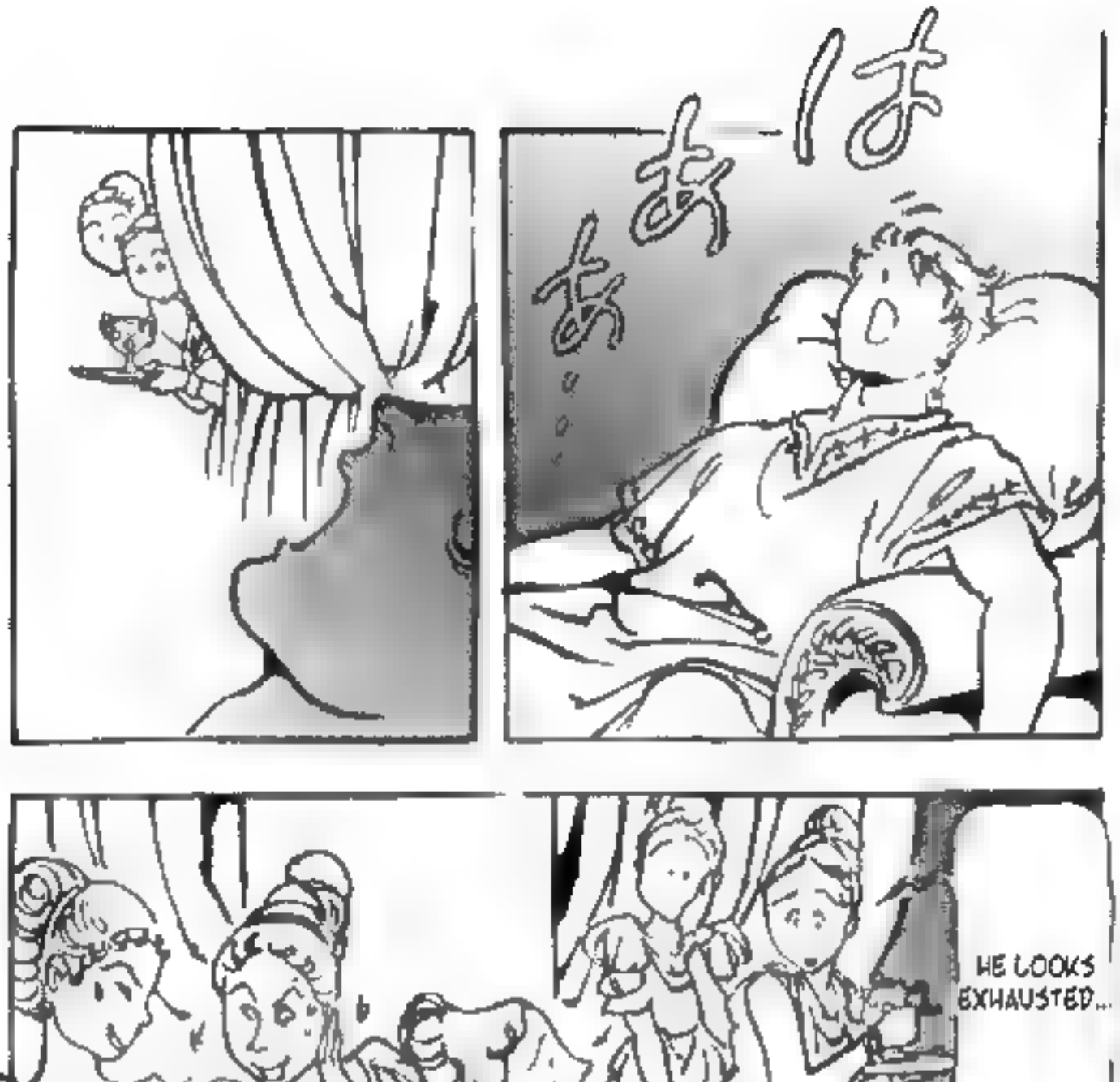
OTHO!

YOU MIGHT PERHAPS SEE ME COME CROSSING OVER THE PYRENEES ON AN ELEPHANT AS HANNIBAL ONCE DID!

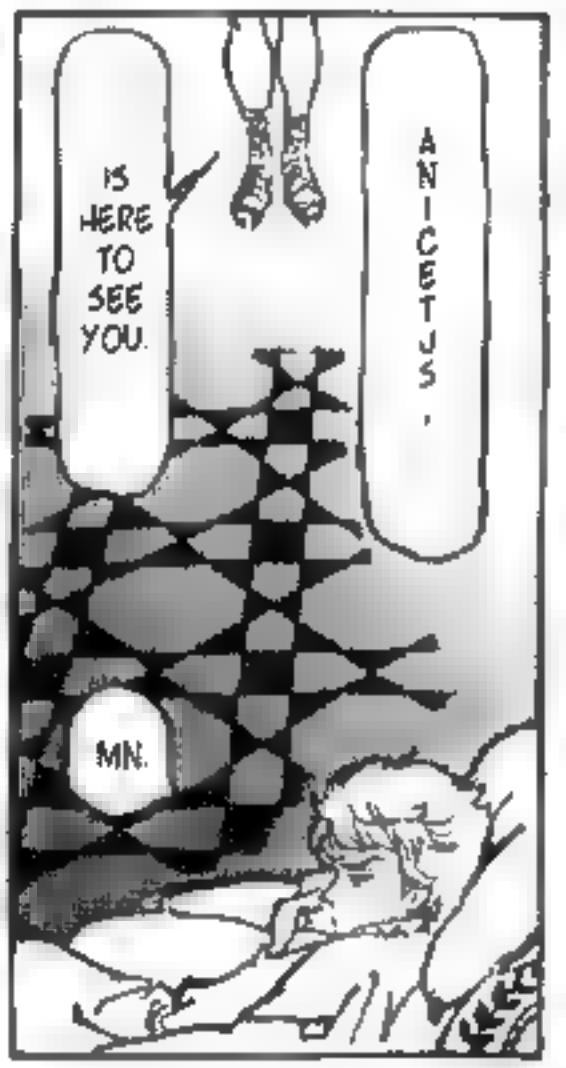
LET US MEET AGAIN ONE DAY!

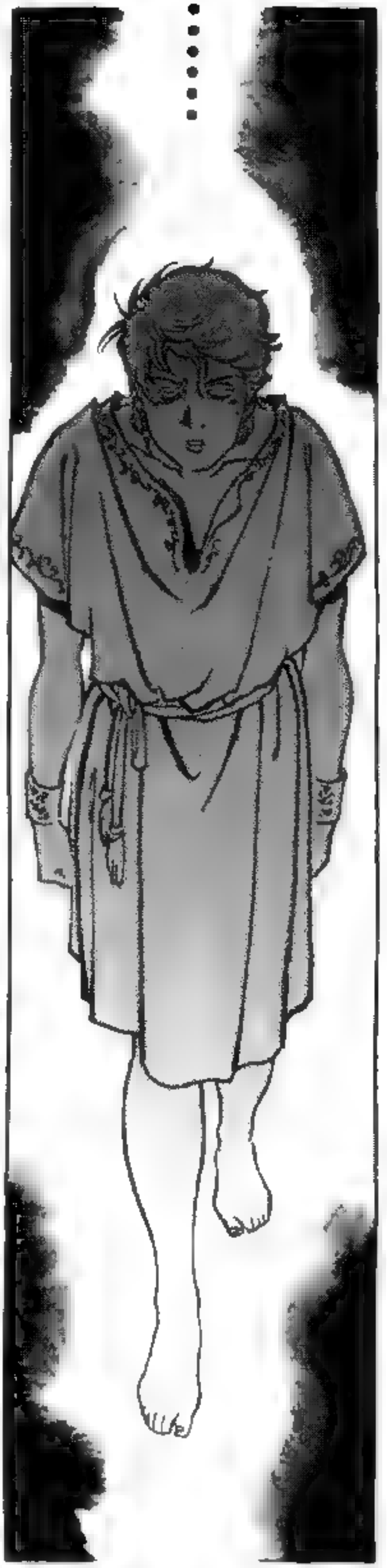
AT THAT TIME,

XIII


WAHA
AFTER ALL, HE IS SPENDING ALL HIS "ENERGIES" ON POPPAEA
WELL, IT'S ONLY EXPECTED
HE LOOKS EXHAUSTED...

WELL, HE ISN'T DOING ANYTHING HE DOESN'T WANT TO DO...
I HOPE THE CAESAR'S BODY CAN HANDLE IT..


IS HERE TO SEE YOU.
A NICE TOUCH, CETUS.
MN.



Also,
The current commander of the fleet at Misenum

Freedman and former tutor to Nero.

Anicetus

I AM GRATEFUL FOR THE CAESAR'S PATRONAGE,

FROM THE VERY BOTTOM OF MY HEART

I'M ALREADY USED TO IT BY NOW...

YES,

ARE YOU FINDING YOUR NEW DUTIES AS A FLEET COMMANDER ALRIGHT?

HELLO, ANICETUS

I GIVE TO YOU...!?

WILL YOU UNDERTAKE WHATEVER MISSION,

IS THAT SO?

IF YOU ARE GRATEFUL,

YOU WISH FOR AGGRIPINA TO BE...!?

TO REPAY YOUR DEBT TO ME!?

THEN DO YOU HAVE THE CONVICTION AND LOYALTY,

I'VE ALREADY DISTANCED MYSELF FROM MY MOTHER AS FAR AS POSSIBLE!

BUT EVEN THAT WAS NOT ENOUGH FOR THE RUMOUR AND GOSSIP-LOVING MASSES!

WHETHER I TRY TO GET ALONG WITH HER OR ANTAGONIZE HER, THE MASSES STILL SPEAK OF ME AS ULTIMATELY BEING MANIPULATED BY MY MOTHER.

IF THAT'S THE CASE, THEN THE ONLY WAY TO BREAK MYSELF LOOSE IS...

A GREAT ROMAN CAESAR HAS NO NEED FOR AN INTRUSIVE AND OVERBEARING MOTHER!

EVEN IF THE IDEA THAT THE CAESAR IS A PUPPET RULER CONTROLLED BY HIS OWN MOTHER REMAINS ONLY A BASELESS RUMOUR...

I CANNOT STAND IT!

TO HAVE MY MOTHER DIE!

YOU'VE ALREADY HEARD TOO MUCH.

IF YOU WERE TO REFUSE, I WOULD HAVE NO CHOICE BUT TO EXECUTE YOU.

AND YOU'LL BE THE ONE TO CARRY IT OUT! I WILL NOT LET YOU REFUSE!

THEN I WILL CARRY IT OUT.

IF THAT IS WHAT YOU TRULY DESIRE,

VERY WELL.

POISON IS OUT OF THE QUESTION.

BUT THE QUESTION IS HOW...

CONSIDERING THE FATES OF CLAUDIUS AND BRITANNICUS,

MY MOTHER WILL BE TOO WARY OF POISONING.

I WILL REWARD YOU GREATLY IF YOU SUCCEED!

I KNEW I COULD COUNT ON YOU, ANICETUS!

THE USE OF A SHIP

I SUGGEST,

?

MEANING...?

DID YOU NOT INTEND FOR ME TO TAKE CARE OF ALL THE DETAILS..?

IF I MAY INTERJECT,

WHEN YOU ENTRUSTED THIS MISSION TO ME,

BUT CARRIES THE DANGER OF SINKING IN ROUGH SEAS.

AS YOU ARE AWARE, A SHIP S A FINE MODE OF TRANSPORT,

YES.

A SHIP?

THAT CAN MAKE SHIPS SINK...

AREN'T THE ONLY THING,

BUT ROUGH SEAS,

AND FUNDS

I WILL NEED SOME TIME,

AS THIS TASK IS QUITE LARGE,

THEN I WILL MAKE THE NEEDED PREPARA-TIONS AT ONCE.

HM...

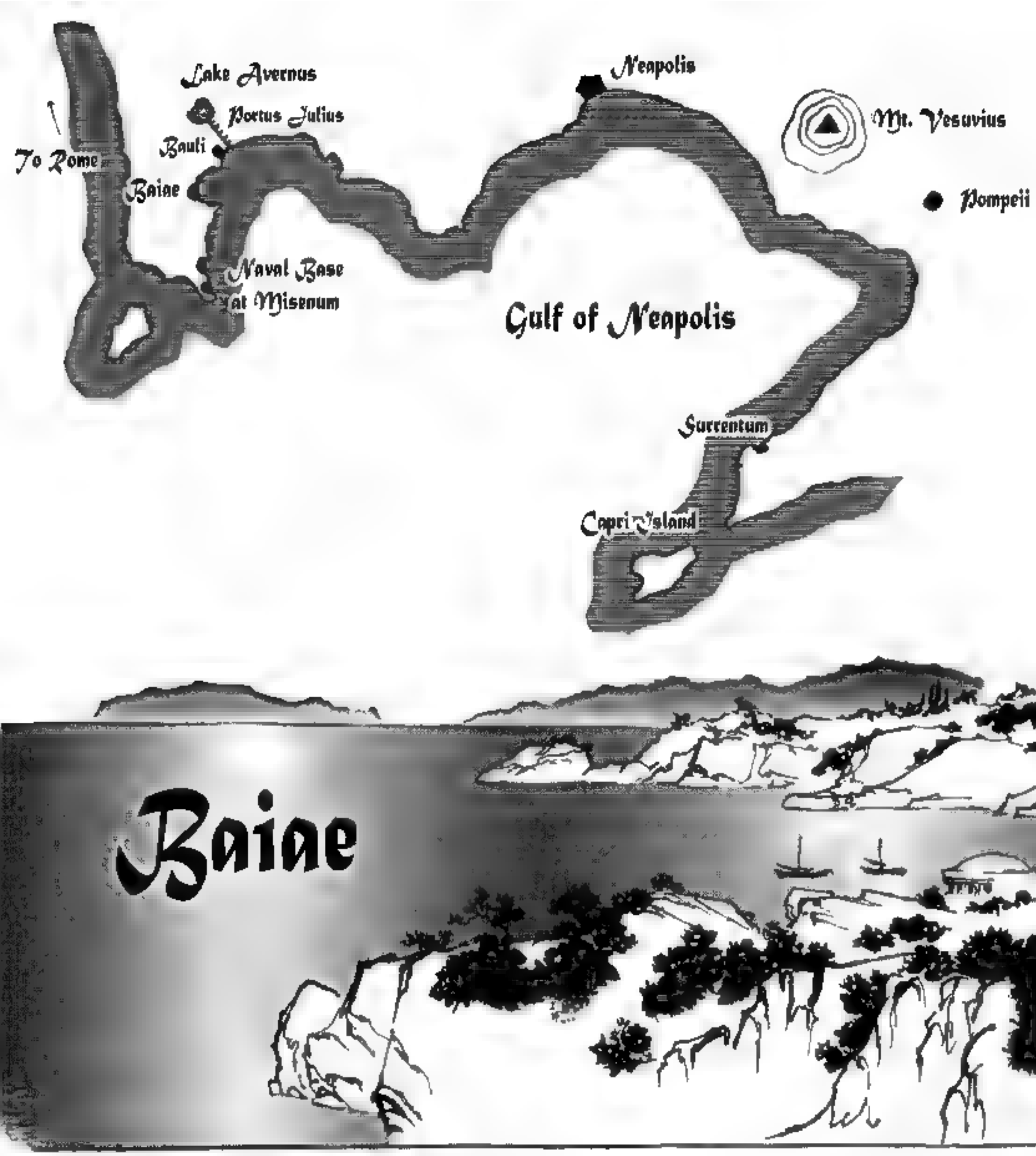
LET'S GO WITH THAT IDEA.

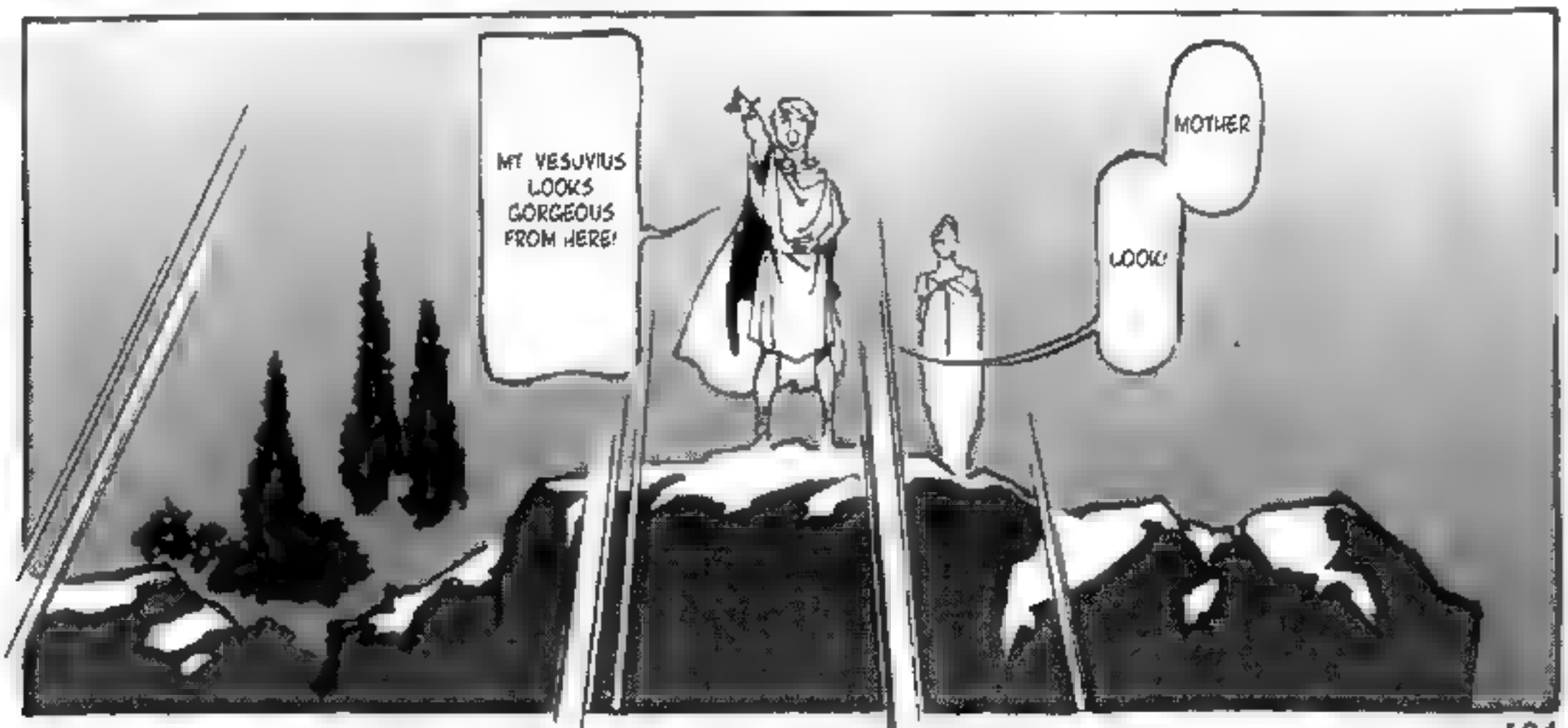
FINE!

ANICETUS!

THEN I WILL LEAVE IT ALL IN YOUR HANDS,

OF COURSE


Lake Avernus
Portus Julius
Bauli
To Rome
Baiae
Naval Base at Misenum
Neapolis
Mt. Vesuvius
Pompeii
Gulf of Neapolis
Surrentum
Capri Island
Baiae


MT. VESUVIUS LOOKS GORGEOUS FROM HERE!
MOTHER
LOOK!

ITS DRIFTING OVER TOWARDS POMPEII!

LOOK AT ALL THE SMOKE ITS SPEWING OUT.

[9]THE FAMOUS ERUPTION THAT DESTROYED POMPEII WOULD OCCUR JUST 12 YEARS LATER FROM THIS POINT

IT WISHES TO WELCOME YOUR ARRIVAL, MOTHER!

IT'S ALMOST AS IF,

THE GULF OF NEAPOLIS LOOKS EVEN MORE BEAUTIFUL TODAY

BUT SURELY THE VIEW HERE AT BAIAE IS SOMETHING TOO!?

YOUR VILLA AT BAULI IS NICE TOO, OF COURSE,

IS REALLY ONLY FIT FOR MEMBERS OF THE JULIO-CLAUDIAN DYNASTY!

A PLACE OF THIS BEAUTY,

I CLEARED OUT ALL THE PATRICIANS FROM THEIR FILTHY VILLAS IN THE IMMEDIATE VICINITY!

THERE WERE THOSE WHO WARNED AGAINST ATTENDING, FOR THEY SUSPECTED A SINISTER PLOT...

WHEN I RECEIVED THE INV TA-TION TO H S VILLA,

NERO IS... AWFULLY CHEERY TODAY...

LOOK!

AND THE SORREN-TINE CAPE BEHIND IT!

THAT'S CAPRI ISLAND,

I GET THE FEELING SUCH CAUTIONS WERE UNNECESSARY...

BUT LOOKING AT THIS CHILD,

I FEEL LIKE I CAN UNDER-STAND WHY HE CHOSE THAT PLACE.

SO THAT'S THE ISLAND T BERIUS SECLUDED HIMSELF ON, WHEN HE GOT TIRED OF THE INCESSANT SQUABBLES AT ROME...

THAT ISLAND IS CURSED.

DON'T BE RIDICULOUS.

*TIBERIUS: SECOND ROMAN EMPEROR AND GREAT-GRAND UNCLE TO NERO. HE WAS REMEMBERED BY THE PUBLIC FOR SUPPOSEDLY BECOMING MAD AND VENGEFUL IN HIS LATER YEARS.

TIBERIUS WAS A BLOODTHIRSTY TYRANT.

HE WAS DEEPLY SUPICIOUS OF OTHERS AND ESPECIALLY FEARED THE INFLUENCE OF MY FATHER GERMANICUS. AFTER MY FATHER'S PASSING, HE DID NOT HESITATE TO KILL MY MOTHER VIPSANIA.

HE MUST HAVE LEFT ROME BECAUSE IT REEKED TOO MUCH OF BLOOD WHICH HE HAD CAUSED TO SPILL.

MY TWO BROTHERS ALSO MET GRUESOME ENDS AT HIS HANDS.

BUT HIS DEPRAVITY DID NOT STOP THERE...

ON CAPRI ISLAND, THAT DISGUSTING OLD MAN LET HIS SICK DESIRES LOOSE ON ABDUCTED CHILDREN AND SANK DEEPER INTO INSANITY...

FORGIVE ME, MOTHER,

FOR CAUSING YOU TO RECALL SUCH PAINFUL MEMORIES.

WHEN I THINK OF THE POSSI-BILITY THAT IT MIGHT RUN IN THE BLOOD OF YOU AND I AS WELL!

THAT SAME MADNESS RAN IN MANY OF OUR BLOOD,

SUCH AS MY BROTHER CALIGULA, WHICH LED TO HIS RUIN.

I DID NOT INVITE YOU HERE TODAY,

FOR YOU TO RUM NATE ON YOUR MOST PAINFUL PAST.

OH,

HOW TRAGIC IT ALL IS!

IT'S BECAUSE OF SUCH SORDID EVENTS N OUR FAMILY'S PAST THAT THE MASSES TH NK OF OUR CONFLICT AS MOTHER AND SON AS S MPLY ANOTHER ROUND OF ENTERTA.N-MENT!

ESPE-CIALLY WHEN THERE IS NO NEED FOR CONFLICT BETWEEN US!

IS THAT NOT RIGHT!?

NERO..

OH...

OHH MY CHILD, NERO...

BE NG WITH YOU HERE NOW,

DO YOU NOT THINK,

THOSE WERE HAPPIER TIMES...?

MAKES ME YEARN FOR THE DAYS,

WHEN YOU WERE MINE AND MINE ALONE.

I ONLY KNOW TOO WELL FROM PAST EXPERIENCE JUST HOW MUCH THE POWERLESS SUFFER...

.....

NOT TO LOSE TO ANYONE..

THAT IS WHY I STROVE SO HARD.

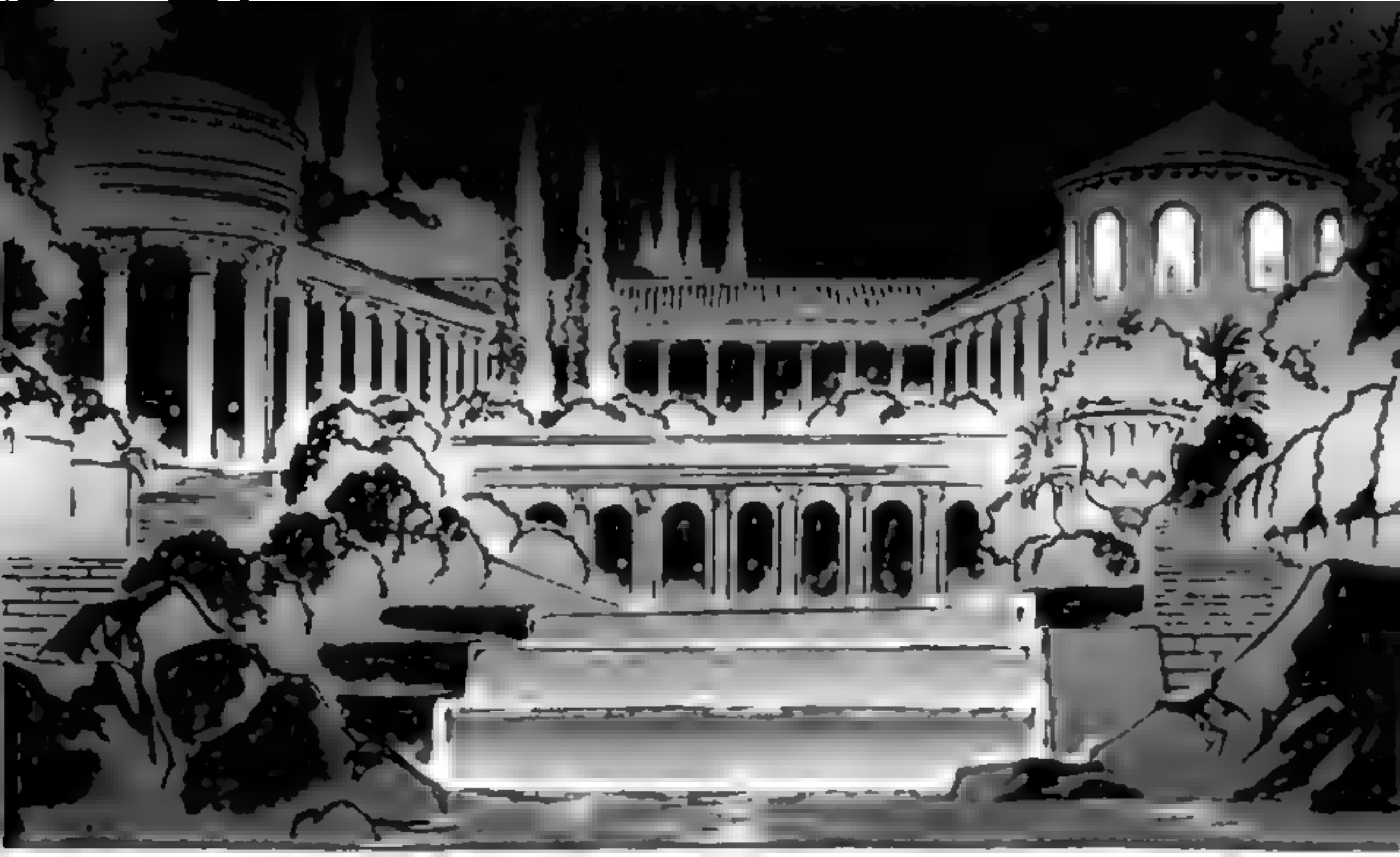
NERO!

AHH!

NERO!

MY DEAR...

NERO!



Her ample bosom,
slender waist,

And thighs brimming
with youth...
What use are words in front
of such captivating beauty?

Embracing her body,
my mind spins in sweet
bliss, as if intoxicated
from honeyed wine.

Venus, clad
in her pale
veils, stands
before me.
Her beauty
radiating
without pause,
My mind , frozen
in rapt attention,
My hands,
reaching out to touch
her pearly skin.

WHAT A LOVELY VOICE!

AHH!

Oh, how I wish to have this sweet languor visit my body over and over again...

My senses return at last.

MY HEART'S IN A FLUTTER

OH ABSOLUTELY!

I'D SAY HE'S SURPASSED MENECRATES

*MENECRATES NERO'S LYRE TEACHER AND SINGER/MUSICIAN

WHO COMPOSED THE LYRICS? OVIDIUS?

OH MY.

THAT'S QUITE A SENSUAL SONG.

NO,

IT'S TITLED,

"AN ODE TO AGRIPPINA."

BOTH THE POEM AND SONG WERE COMPOSED BY ME.

[3]OVIDIUS: FAMOUS ROMAN POET, ESPECIALLY KNOWN FOR THEMES OF LOVE AND EROTICISM

OF COURSE NOT.

NO,

MOTHER?

DID I OFFEND YOU IN ANY WAY,

YOU'RE LEAVING ALREADY!?

THANK YOU FOR INVIT NG ME.

TODAY WAS A LOVELY DAY.

I WOULD HAVE LOVED TO SHOW HIM OFF TO YOU MORE.

IT'S FINE, NERO.

LET ME INTRO-DUCE YOU.

THIS IS MY GLADIATOR [REMUS

I HAD HIM PERFORM IN MY PLAY OF THE AENEID AT THE AMPHITHEATRE.

I'M NOT MUCH OF AN APPRE-CIATOR,

OF SWORDS-MANSHIP

WHAT A PITY

AH,

I WAS ABOUT TO SHOW YOU SOME GERMANIC SWORDSMAN-SHIP

YOU PREPARED THIS HUGE SHIP JUST TO TAKE ME BACK TO BAJUL!?

I MUST OBJECT FORCE-FULLY!

NO,

THIS IS REALLY TOO MUCH.

BAULI IS ONLY A LITTLE WAYS OFF FROM HERE.

THEIR WEALTH MAY HAVE ATTRACTED PIRATES OR BANDITS TO LURK CLOSE BY!

THERE ARE MANY RICH PATRICIANS HERE TO ESCAPE THE HUSTLE AND BUSTLE OF ROME DUR NG MINERVA'S FESTIVAL.

WELL, IF YOU INSIST...

THE NAVY AT M SENUM WORKED HARD TO BUILD TH S SHIP JUST FOR YOU!

SO PLEASE STEP ABOARD!

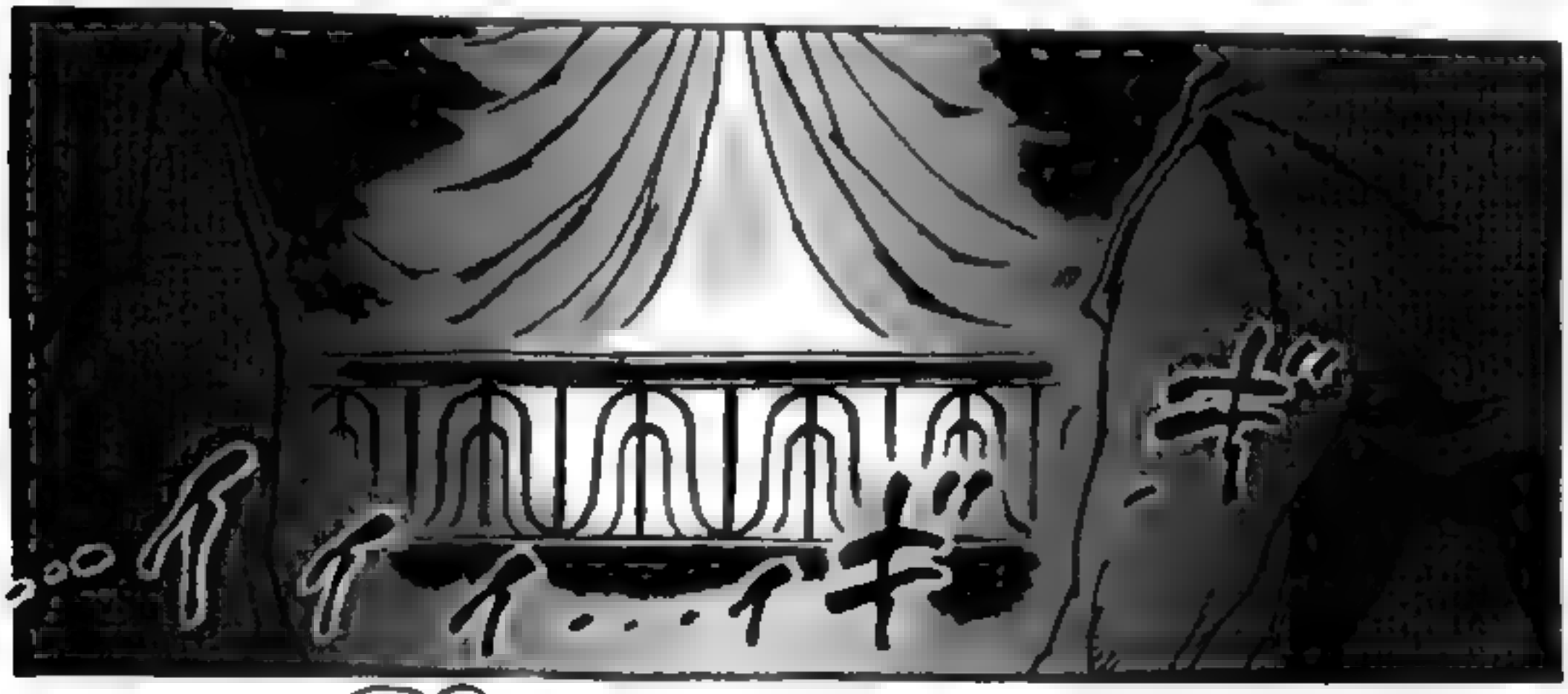
IT WOULD TARNISH MY HONOUR.

IF ANYTHING WERE TO HAPPEN TO THE CAESAR'S VERY OWN MOTHER,

.....

I SUPPOSE THAT'S TRUE...

WELL.



HE BUILT ON A SHIP
WHAT A CURIOUS CABIN.
HM.

IT SEEMS LIKE NERO REALLY HAD A CHANGE OF HEART

AGRIPPINA,

OF COURSE!

YES, ACER-RONIA?

YOU THINK SO,

HE SEEMS TO HAVE TURNED AROUND.

YES,

DON'T YOU THINK SO AS WELL, CREPEREIUS?

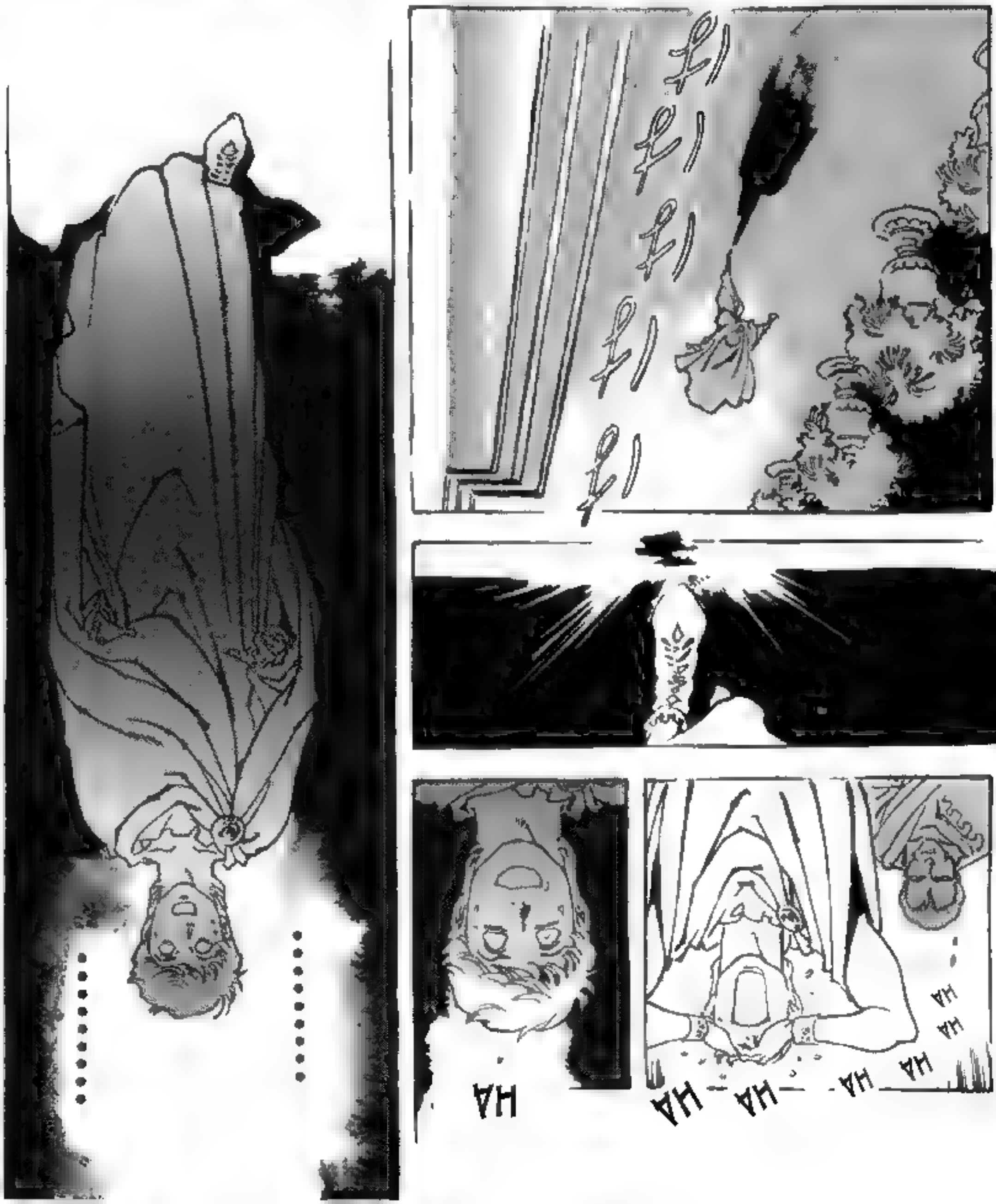
THAT WOULD BE NICE.

IF THAT WERE THE CASE...

I'M SURE YOUR DIGNITY AS THE CAESAR'S MOTHER WILL ASCEND ONCE AGAIN.

WITH THIS,

اهاها


اهاها
اهاها
اهاها
اهاها
اهاها
HA
HA
HA
HA
HA
HA
HA
HA
HA
HA

HUFF
HUFF

HUFF
HUFF

HUFF
HUFF

PANT
PANT
PANT

PANT
PANT

ANICETUS!

ANICETUS

はあ
はあ

AM I,

REALLY WINNING...?

IS THAT CHILD REALLY THE SAME CHILD I DES RE...?

REALLY TAKE BACK THAT CHILD'S HEART...?

CAN I, AS A LONE WOMAN,

I CANNOT STILL HOLD ONTO SUCH IDEAS AT TH S POINT!

NO!

I MADE SO MANY MISTAKES FOR THE LONGEST T ME BY DOING SO...

ANGUISH!

ANGUISH

ANICETUS!

PLEASE CALM DOWN FIRST!

WHAT IS THE MATTER?

HUFF

HUFF

HUFF

IT SAFELY SAILED TO THE OPEN SEA.

WORRY NOT, CAESAR

WHERE IS IT!?

T-THE SHIP!

THAT CHILD WAS NEVER ANYONE'S SOLE POSSESSION TO BEGIN WITH...

THE ONLY THING I CAN DO IS TO NOT LOSE TO ANYONE IN MY LOVE FOR HIM...

NO..

TO FINISH THE TASK

IT'S ALMOST TIME THAT THE CONTRAPTION WILL BE USED.

STOP THE PLAN!

NO!

STOOP!!

IT'S ALREADY TOO LATE!

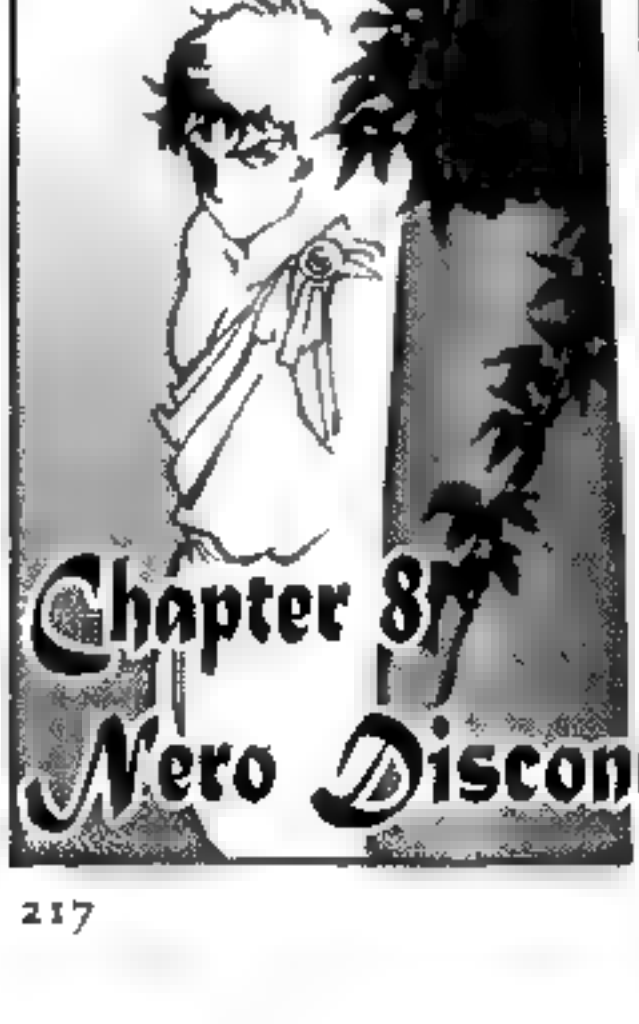
YOU CAN'T BE SERIOUS

NO!
NO!
NO!

CAESAR!

YOU MUST CALM DOWN!

CAESAR!



Chapter 8: Nero Disconcerted

YOU HAVE TO STOP IT!

NO!

ANTICETUS!

WHY DID IT TAKE SO LONG FOR ME TO REALIZE SOMETHING SO OBVIOUS...?

ALL CHILDREN INEVITABLY GROW INDEPENDENT... MOREOVER, THAT CHILD IS NOW CAESAR...

TO LOVE HIM SO DEARLY IS PRECISELY WHAT MADE IT IMPOSSIBLE FOR ME TO BE THE MODEST MOTHER QUIETLY SUPPORTING HER SON FROM THE SIDELINES...

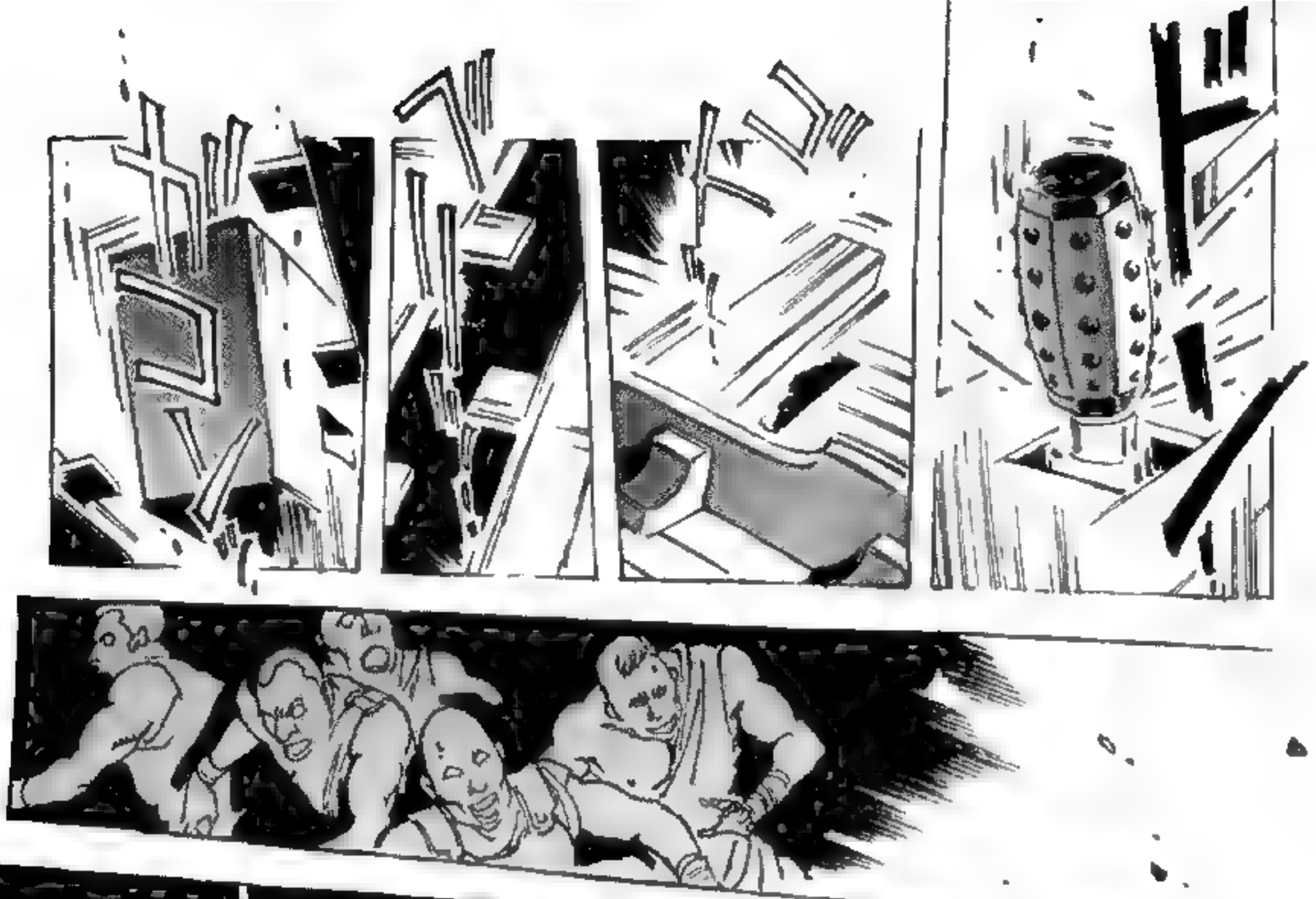
WE DID IT!

HEEELP!

HELP!

AHHHH!

DO IT!



HELP!

HELP!

HEEEELP!

IT WAS A LARGE, LUXURIOUS SHIP!
HEY, I SAW A SHIP SINK JUST NOW!

WONDER WHAT HAPPENED
THE SHIP'S HULL SEEMED TO COME APART ALL OF A SUDDEN.

A FISHERMAN OR SOME PERSON FOUND HER FLOATING ON THE SEAS,

YES,

AND FERRIED HER BACK TO HER VILLA AT BAUL.

THE PLAN FAILED!?

TH S IS NOT GOOD!

NOW MY MOTHER KNOWS THAT I TRIED TO KILL HER!

THIS IS MY MOTHER I'M DEALING WITH! SHE'LL MOST CERTAINLY HAVE HER REVENGE...

SHE MIGHT TRY TO BRING THE MATTER BEFORE THE SENATE OR SPREAD THE SORDID TALE ALL ACROSS ROME...

HIRE SOMEONE SHADY TO... TO...

OR... MAYBE EVEN...

YOU FAILED TO DO **WHAT** TO AGRIPPINA!?

SENECA!

NO!

THIS IS TERRIBLE!

BURRUS!

WHY DID YOU NOT CONSULT US ABOUT SUCH A SERIOUS DECISION...?

YOU REALLY WERE TOO RASH THIS TIME ..

I CAN HARDLY BELIEVE THIS!

PANT

PANT

PANT

MORE-OVER,

THE GUARDS ARE ATTACHED TO THE WHOLE FAMILY OF THE CAESARS!

WHAT SHOULD I DO RIGHT NOW!?

BUT JUST TELL ME!

LECTURE ME ALL YOU WANT LATER!

THEY WOULD NOT DARE LAY A HAND ON AN OFF-SPRING OF GER-MANICUS!

CAN YOU ORDER YOUR PRAETORIAN GUARD TO FIN SH THE JOB ..?

.....

.....

ANICETUS SHOULD BE HELD RESPON-SIBLE TO FINISH HIS TASK.

AS THE SHIP HAS ALREADY SAILED!

SO TO SPEAK,

I CARE NOT BY WHAT MEANS!

I WILL REWARD YOU GREATLY ONCE THE DEED IS DONE!

YOU ARE TO FINISH THE TASK YOU UNDER-TOOK!

I ORDER YOU AS IMPERA-TOR,

ANICETUS!

IS HERE TO DELIVER A MESSAGE TO THE CAESAR!

A MES-SENGER FROM AGRIP-PINA,

SO THAT I MAY NOT BE UNJUSTLY FORCED TO TAKE UPON BLAME AT A LATER TIME.

I MUST, THEN, HAVE A JUST CAUSE FOR THIS WHICH CANNOT BE DIS-MISSED,

THE TASK I AM CHARGED WITH INVOLVES SLAYING A CAESAR'S MOTHER.

WHAT?

HOW-EVER,

I DO HAVE ONE REQUEST

UNDER-STOOD

THEN I WILL GIVE IT TO YOU NOW!

SO YOU WANT SOLID PROOF OF MY MOTHER'S CRIME, IS THAT IT?

VERY WELL

I AM A LONGTIME SERVANT OF AGRIP-PINA.

I AM AGERINUS.

SHE WOULD LIKE TO REPORT THAT SHE WAS MET WITH AN UNFORSEEN ACCIDENT ON HER WAY HOME BUT BY THE HEAVEN'S FAVOUR, SHE MANAGED TO ESCAPE DEATH.

SHE BEGS TO YOU,

THOUGH YOU MAY BE ALARMED BY THE DISASTER, YOU NEED NOT PAY THE VISIT OF A FILIAL SON FOR THE TIME BEING, AS SHE SIMPLY REQUIRES SOME TIME TO RECUPERATE.

AHEM.

APPREHEND THIS MAN!

GUARDS!

FROM MAKING A LETHAL PLUNGE AT ME!

HE WAS MOMENTS AWAY.

THE PROOF IS THIS DAGGER HE HAD HIDDEN!

HE IS AN ASSASSIN SENT BY MY MOTHER!

NOW GO, ANICETUS!

THERE YOU HAVE IT!

AGERINUS STILL HASN'T RETURNED...

WHAT'S GOING ON...?

IN ORDER TO AVOID ANTAGONIZING NERO FURTHER, I HAD TO LET HIM KNOW THAT I AM NOT ANGRY AND WILL NOT TAKE REVENGE... THAT I AM ONLY TOO WILLING TO LOOK PAST THE INCIDENT AS SIMPLY AN ACCIDENT...

STILL.

THERE WAS NO OTHER CHOICE.

IS IT AN OMEN...?

REALLY BE INTENT ON KILLING ME NO MATTER WHAT...?

COULD NERO..

MY SWEET CHILD NERO...

EVEN AFTER ALL THE LOVE I GAVE TO HIM...

WOULD HE REALLY...?

WHO'S THERE!?

IT'S JUST YOU, REMUS.

OH,

TRULY A FOOL.

YOU ARE,

NERO.

YOUR OWN ACTIONS

YOU DO NOT UNDER-STAND,

WHAT!? IT WAS YOU!?

ببا

I WENT OUT TO THE SEA AND SAVED THAT WOMAN.

BECAUSE YOU WERE IN DEEP PANIC AND REGRET THE NIGHT BEFORE,

BUT YOU NOW TRY DESPER-ATELY TO KILL HER AGAIN?

SILENCE!

YOU'RE JUST A SLAVE!

HOW DARE YOU!

10

AND HOW DARE YOU,

ADDRESS ME SO CASUALLY!

YOU SPEAK WAY OUT OF LINE!

THE WORTH OF A SINGLE LOCK...

OF MY HAIR!

WOULD NOT EQUAL,

EVEN A MILLION OF YOU,

WHAT ARE YOU, IF NOT A COWARD THAT CANNOT EVEN SLEEP ALONE AT NIGHT!?

YOU'RE UTTER TRASH!

I SOMEONE...

I SO DESPERATELY WANT TO HEAR GOOD NEWS...

WILL NO ONE COME...

FOR MY SAKE...?

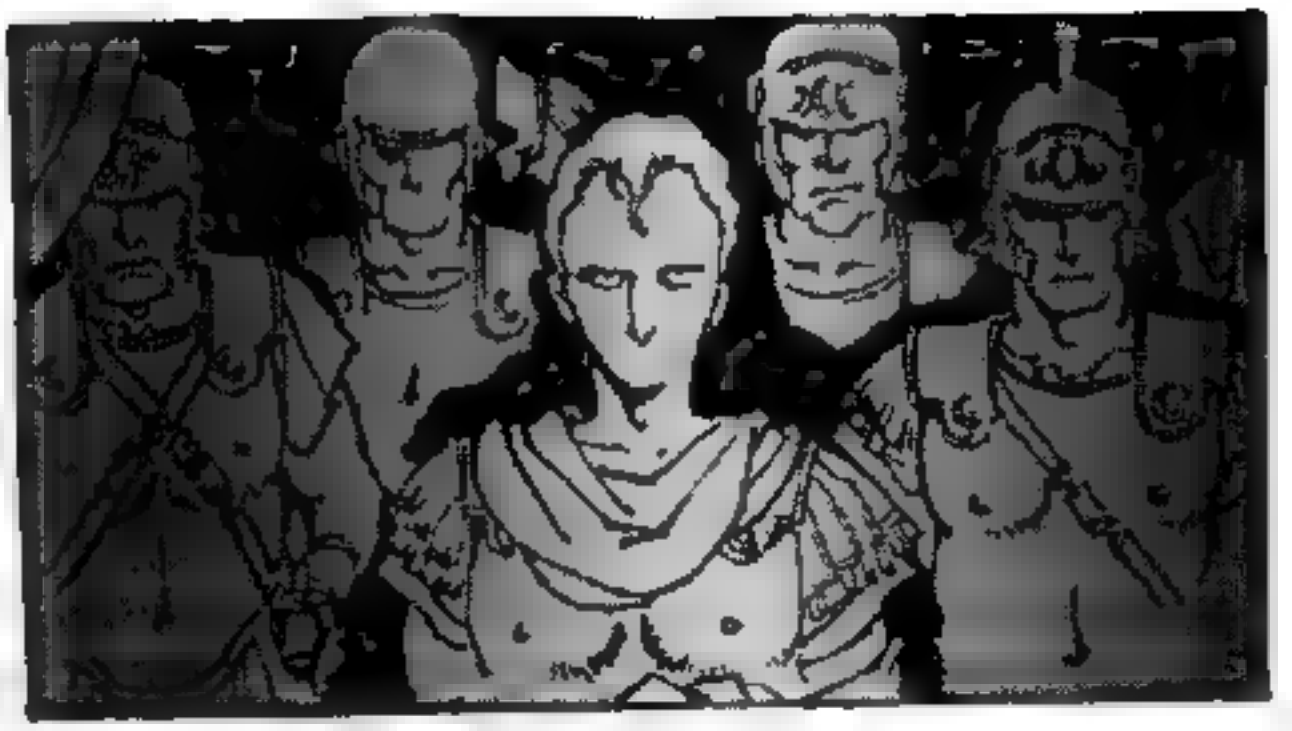
WHY HAVEN'T YOU RETURNED BY NOW, AGERINUS...?

ANYBODY IS

IS SOMEONE HERE?

IF NERO HAS SENT YOU TO CHECK MY STATUS, TELL HIM I AM DOING WELL.

FOR WHAT HAVE YOU SOLDIERS COME HERE?



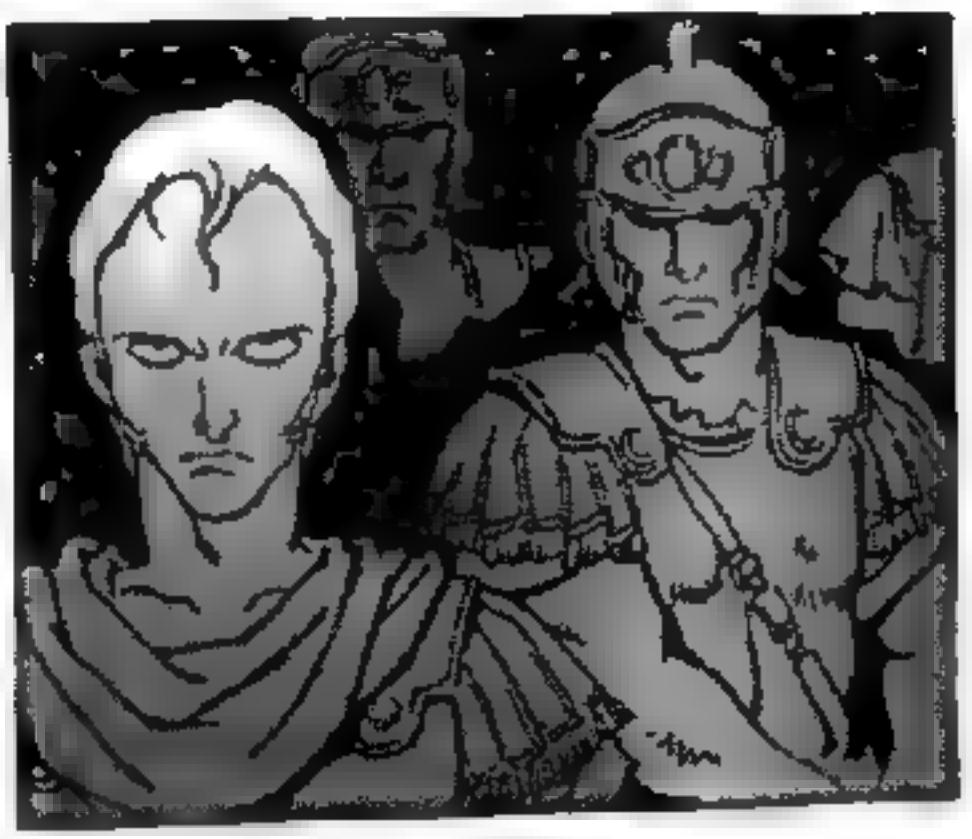
THERE'S NO WAY THAT CHILD COULD HAVE ORDERED SUCH A THING!

N-NO!

I WILL NOT BELIEVE IT!

IF,

YOU HAVE COME TO DO ME HARM...



STOP IT!

AND!?

WHAT OF IT!?

I AM THE CAESAR!

AND THAT IS THE FACE,

WITH WHICH YOU SENTENCED PEOPLE TO DEATH!

THAT IS THE REAL YOU!

NO MATTER YOUR FANCY CLOTHES OR INFLATED EGO,

LOOK AT THE FACE REFLECTED IN THE WATER! THAT IS YOU!

TAKE A GOOD LOOK!

REEVAVLUATE"

AND OPEN YOUR EYES!

YOUR OWN ACTIONS!

IF HE'S DETERMINED ENOUGH TO TELL HIS OWN MOTHER TO DIE...

VERY WELL... I SEE MY CHILD HAS GROWN UP TO BE A FINE ADULT.

STRIKE RIGHT HERE!

COME, THEN! FINISH THE JOB!

FOR THAT IS WHAT BORE NERO!

SMITE MY WOMB!

My Name is Nero Vol. 1 -End-

Translated by Hox

Afterword

IN AN ARTICLE THAT WAS INCLUDED IN THE JULY EDITION OF COMIC BINGO MAGAZINE, HISTORIAN YUGE TOORU, A SPECIALIST ON ANCIENT ROME, SAID THUS: "THE ROME DURING NERO'S ERA WAS TRULY A CITY WITHOUT ANY WANTS."

AS I WAS A NOVICE TO ROMAN HISTORY, I HAD TO DO SOME STUDYING PRIOR TO DRAWING THIS MANGA. IN DOING SO, THE IMPRESSION OF ROME THAT I FORMED WAS THAT HAD THEY KNOWN ABOUT GUNPOWDER AND INTERNAL COMBUSTION, THEY WOULD HAVE SURELY CONQUERED THE WORLD AND BROUGHT UPON THE MODERN WORLD TWO MILLENIA EARLIER.

THE ROMAN SOCIETY WAS TRULY AN ASTOUNDING ONE. THEY USED CONCRETE FOR THEIR BUILDINGS, LIVED IN MULTI-STORIED APARTMENTS, APPRECIATED GOURMET CUISINE, AND WORKED UP A SWEAT IN GYMS, SALONS, AND BATHS. ALL THIS AT A TIME WHEN OUR JAPANESE ANCESTORS WERE STILL LIVING IN THE MYSTS OF PRE-HISTORY!

BACK WHEN I WAS IN SCHOOL, I WAS TAUGHT THE VIEW THAT HISTORY WAS A RECORD OF INCREMENTAL HUMAN PROGRESS. THE MARXIST VIEW OF HISTORY ALSO CLASSIFIED HISTORY INTO VARIOUS STEPS ALONG A PATH OF PROGRESS.

HOWEVER, THE UNUSUALLY ADVANCED ROMAN SOCIETY MAKES ME HOLD DOUBTS ABOUT SUCH VIEWS. DO HUMANS REALLY BUILD UPON WISDOM WITHOUT FAIL? IS IT REALLY INEVITABLE THAT WE KEEP PROGRESSING TO A BETTER ERA?

AFTER THE ROMAN EMPIRE'S FALL, EUROPE ENTERED THE MEDIEVAL ERA, AN ERA DOMINATED BY CHRISTIANITY AND POPULARLY NICKNAMED "DARK AGES" IN THE WEST. AND AS THE NICKNAME IMPLIES, THE ACCUMULATED HUMAN WISDOM WAS SIMPLY REDUCED TO THE CHURCH'S DOCTRINE. MEEKNESS WAS A VIRTUE AND THE MASSES WERE TAUGHT TO ENDURE THE HARDSHIPS AND INCESSANT WARFARE OF THE MEDIEVAL WORLD.

IT WAS IN NERO'S REIGN THAT SUCH VALUES CONTRARY TO TRADITIONAL ROMAN VALUES CAME TO ITS FIRST GREAT CLASH. FOR HIS PERSECUTION OF CHRISTIANS, MURDER OF FAMILY MEMBERS, AND LURID BEHAVIOUR INAPPROPRIATE TO CHRISTIAN VALUES, HE HAS SINCE BEEN REMEMBERED IN HISTORY AS A BRUTISH TYRANT.

HOWEVER, THE NERO THAT EMERGES FROM THE HISTORICAL RECORDS IS NOT SUCH AN EVIL FIGURE. SEVERAL OF HIS PREDECESSORS ARGUABLY COMMITTED WORSE OFFENCES AND POSSESSED WORSE TEMPERAMENTS. THERE WAS NO SHORTAGE OF TERRIBLE EMPERORS AFTER NERO AS WELL.

STILL, NERO WAS CERTAINLY A FIGURE LACKING AN ESSENTIAL SOMETHING. THIS DEFICIT GRADUALLY CONSUMED EVEN THE LIKEABLE ASPECTS OF HIS CHARACTER, TRANSFORMING HIM TO A WHOLLY DETESTABLE FIGURE BY THE END. WHAT WAS THIS ESSENTIAL QUALITY THAT NERO LACKED? WAS HIS DEFICIENCY ROOTED IN SOME GENERAL DEFICIENCY IN THE VALUES OF THE ROMAN SOCIETY AS A WHOLE? COULD HIS FLAW BE IDENTIFIED AS A "ROMAN FLAW?"
I, FOR ONE, DO NOT THINK SO.

I THINK THE ROMAN SOCIETY WAS NEARLY IDENTICAL TO OUR MODERN SOCIETY. TRUE, THEY DID NOT HAVE GUNPOWDER, CARS, ELECTRICITY, OR CHURCHES, BUT I BELIEVE THE FUNDAMENTAL DYNAMICS UNDERLYING NERO'S ERA AND HIS PYSCHOLOGICAL CONDITION ARE STILL CURRENT WITH OUR SOCIETY TODAY. THAT IS THE BELIEF THAT LED ME TO DRAWING THIS MANGA.

NOW THEN, THE MANGA WILL CONTINUE ON TO ITS SECOND HALF, WHEREIN NERO ENCOUNTERS CHRISTIANS AND HE WILL DRIFT FURTHER AND FURTHER APART FROM HOW HE WAS IN HIS BOYHOOD. I HOPE YOU WILL ENJOY THE STORY, BOTH AS AN ANCIENT ROMAN STORY AS WELL AS A MODERN STORY.

-YASUHIKO YOSHIKAZU-